Nebulous

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by EvelynFire

Summary

When Doctor Lecter forms a personal interest in his patient, Will Graham finds himself at the liberties of Lecter's unorthodox and often frightening therapy. Can Hannibal fashion a kindred soul from his patient, or will he ultimately break him.

Notes

Caution, this work includes graphic violence, non-consensual treatment, drug use, and many other triggering actions. Please contact me at EvelynFire.tumblr.com if you have any questions about what will be included in this piece.

Chapter 1

The light of the sun lit the red flesh of Wills closed eyelids. He could see the blue negative space of after image seared into his retina. He sat on a plastic bench that was made to look like wood, though it wasn't. Wood could splinter, it could cut. Wood was somehow dangerous. Close to him, the early spring daffodils were being smashed into chlorophyll pulp by a young woman named Ann with a rock. She hated the heat, and wanted to prevent the coming season by destroying all evidence of its germination. Will didn't try to stop her. She couldn't understand his speech.

"It is a lovely day for it." A somber voice behind Will spoke.

"A lovely day for sunbathing, or for smashing flowers?" Will sought clarification, yet did not truly need it.

"A lovely day to seek out whatever seasonal pleasures one wishes." Doctor Lecter, inclusive of every person's preoccupation.

"I haven't felt the sun on me in a very long time." Will confided, adjusting his position, echoing Dr. Lecter's open stance next to his bench. He uncrossed his arms, and made to look inviting.

"I can leave you to it, Mister Graham." Doctor Lecter offered.

Will felt as though he were being confronted, or accused of lying. Doctor Lecter roused in him a certain defiance. As though he knew when Will was being ingenuine with him. Will glanced to his left, the man standing, feeling the rays on his skin just as Will had been doing. He looked at Lecter's suit, his identification badge; "Doctor Hannibal Lecter, Psychiatrist. Willow breeze Mental Health Centre."

Will had no identification on him. No wallet, no badge to grant him privileges. He did have a uniform. A white cotton shirt, green linen trousers, slip on shoes. Lecter's ensemble spoke for him as did Will's. Doctor Lecter wore a well fitting suit of three pieces. Often he had on a white coat when dealing directly with patients, though at Will's request, the coat was removed for their private sessions.

"I could use a whiskey." Will spoke forlorn, he missed the small and large comforts of his home.

"We both know alcohol is not a problem for you, however it is for many of your fellow residents, and cannot be allowed."

"Are we having an impromptu session now Doctor Lecter?" Will asked, courteous, yet with a sharp edge to tell his displeasure.

"My apologies Will." Lecter looked back up at the sky, but still spoke. "though your appointment is in twenty minutes, perhaps you and I may make our way to the offices

together now."

"Sure." Will stood, stretching his legs out. He walked over the green and yellow of crushed flower, the shadow of doctor Lecter brushing his legs as he saw Will back to the sliding plexiglass door.

Will held the door for Hannibal. The two walked down a hallway to the left. The room with a plaque reading "Doctor Hannibal Lecter."

The room was decorated with the same furniture the rest of the campus was, save for a hard wood desk that had files organized alphabetically by patient. Hannibal lifted a heavy pen and his note pad.

Will sat in his usual seat out of habit. This was his fifth week of sessions with Doctor Lecter.

"How did you sleep last night, will?" Hannibal began.

"Like a loosened fire hydrant." Will responded, as though it meant nothing.

"Are you still seeing disturbing images?" Hannibal asked as one would ask about the weather.

Will smiled with his unease. An uneven kind of grin that was disconcerting. "Yes, yes I am." The words almost came out strangled. As if he hurried to be done with his turn speaking.

"Is the content the same as you described to me previously?" Hannibal wrote down observations

Will rubbed his face, his fingers bristling along his beard stubble. "More or less."

"Would you mind describing the dream you had last night for me Will?"

"The dream happened in my old home, in Wolf Trap, I've mentioned it to you." Will looked to Hannibal, who nodded. He remembered. "I walked, almost possessed from my bedroom to the front porch. And when I started down the steps I felt… I was… submerging into wetness. I was descending into… It was blood." Will, felt shaky with the memory, and watching Hannibal take note of his agitated state was putting him on edge. "And it was… suffocating me."

"That does not sound like a terribly uncommon dream." Hannibal's legs crossed "Many people experience dreams of drowning or suffocating. Needless to say they can have lasting effects on a healthy mind, worse effects still on an ailing one."

"It was the blood of all the people I've seen… dead, bleeding all over carpets, and cement, and sofas" Will clarified. "I knew this blood. It felt like revenge."

"But you did not kill these people."

"I feel like I did… I remember doing it because I was the killer… at least for a few minutes. But that never goes away."

“In a fashion, your empathy betrays you.” Hannibal explained. “You can empathize with killers because you can help find justice, yet you cannot empathize with the victims because it has never been necessary for you to.”

“I don’t know if that is who I am.” Will crossed his leg.

“Then who are you Will?

“I don’t know.”
Hannibal scribbled down some observation.

“I’m sorry if you feel I’m not making adequate progress Doctor Lecter.” Will said more sharply than he meant to.

“No one expects, nor demands you progress faster than you determine. I am only here to help you on the journey.” Hannibal gave Will a small smile. “And you know you may call me Hannibal, if you wish.”

Will relaxed an inch it seemed.

“Have you been keeping your journal?” Hannibal redirected the course of the session.

“You know, I find it Difficult to talk about myself so much…” Will was amazed how closed off he was today from any attempts of therapy. He felt like he was personally affronting Doct- Hannibal.

“I find journals useful in dissecting my own thoughts. A place to analyze myself in a meditative way. Though it is not for everyone.” Hannibal dismissed. “Have you been enjoying the company of the other residents?”

“I was visiting with Ann earlier, as you saw.” Will smirked very subtly with he left corner of his mouth. “The other patients are very… Intense.”

“Curious that you would consider Ann a comfortable associate given her penchant for smashing things.” Hannibal wrote another note

“Ann I understand.”

“You understand her violent urges.” Hannibal urged, not putting words into Will’s mouth, but urging more to follow through.

“I do.” Will conceded. He hated looking into that section of his mind. The part of him that burned red with hate. The part that reveled in recreating murders in his mind. The part of him that felt baptized in blood curdling screams and pleas for help. The part he put in the corner of himself.

“What are you thinking about Will?” Hannibal asked after a long while of silence on Will’s half.

“The smashed daffodils.” Will lied.

“What do you see in the daffodils?”

“Ann’s discomfort.” Will clenched a fist. “Her hatred of the earth… the way the earth makes her feel. She’s taking it out on the daffodils though they’re only a symptom of what she really hates. It’s irrational of course, she’s not a very balanced person… But I can understand the desire to beat things with a rock sometimes.” Will smiled, but it was a forced painful look.

“She’s here for much more than killing flowers.” Hannibal reminded Will.

“No one was ever hospitalized for killing a plant.” Will’s smile faded quickly. He saw from Ann’s perspective, the answer to everything was to beat it.

“Do you see yourself in Ann?” Hannibal asked.

“I see myself in everyone.” Will ran a hand through his hair.

Chapter Two

Will returned to his room feeling raw, emotionally raw and light in the head. Were he back home, he would take a few aspirin with a glass of whiskey, but he had no such relief here. Will had been through therapy two times before, but never had a psychiatrist impacted him as much as Doctor Hannibal Lecter did. Will felt as though Lecter genuinely wanted to help him. It made it easier for will to accept the treatment. Sometimes.

Will sat down at the desk in his small, painted cinderblock room. Very basic quality, no where near the high polish and stain of Doctor Lecters oaken desk. He flipped to the third page of the notebook that lay mostly ignored. Only sparse ideas and scribbles littering the first two pages. Front and back.

Will wrote about missing his dogs. He missed the smell, the shed hair that would tumble across his wood floors. He missed every once in awhile, a dog resting its head on his lap.

Doctor lecter asked him to bring his journal the next day to their session. So Will wrote, if not for any other reason than to have something to discuss tomorrow. He wrote about Jack Crawford, his resentment to him for pressuring him back into field work. He wrote about Alana Bloom. His affection for her, the way she was, how she smelled. Will sighed. Alana was the person who recommended Willow Breeze to him. He missed their rapport. He missed kissing her. Will scribbled out the last sentence or two.

Will wrote more about the murders he'd seen. The killers he'd been. He stopped writing when he started to feel nauseous, light headed, dizzy. He flipped the notebook closed with too much vigor. He crawled into his bed.

Will woke several times in the night, sweaty, hot. He fell back asleep long enough to have fragments of rapid eye movement. He dreamt he was in his house again. He was in bed in his dream. Above him, a matte black presence, it bore down on him, and he felt the pressure on his whole body, it filled his nose, his mouth, he felt it stuffed into his ears and eyes. He couldn't lift his head, nor his arms or legs. He tried to scream, but the miasma only snuck deeper into his chest. He felt everything blackened. Everything was gone. There was only pressure.

He woke screaming, the force of the ethereal black still hung over him in his twilight state. He was being held down by men in clean scrubs, who didn't have a name for him and kept calling "SIR!" to him, in some effort to bring him back.

"I'm fine, fine" Will came back to himself, but the nurses didn't let up from him. Will looked at each of the men, in between their eyes. "I was having a bad dream."

The nurses looked at each other, and let go with a silent consensus that Will was not a danger. He'd never given anyone a problem before.

Chapter Three

Will was trusted with delivering himself to his appointments. He woke himself up every morning, or he was still awake from the night before. He arrived at breakfast on time, usually. He attended a group therapy session, he entertained himself, he sat outside, he made small talk with other patients. Walking himself to his appointments was a privilege won though predictably good behavior.

Will was almost to the office with the plaque “Doctor Hannibal Lecter”. The large bland clock on the wall stuck its fingers to the right and down, letting the world know proudly that it was three thirty. Looking at the clock, the fingers started swirling, hours passing in the span of seconds till the lines of distinction lost all singularity. The fingers swirled into a mass of whirling black and Will could only watch in horror. Dizzily watching the fast paced clock, he twisted clockwise and fell, his right temple making a sick wet packing sound on the linoleum. All the colors were black in front of Will’s eyes.

Will didn’t see anything again till his eyelids were pried open, a light dilating him. He felt like he was back on the plastic wood bench, soaking in sun. He came back to himself, and heard his name called several times before he registered any consciousness. “Mister Graham?” A voiced called, clearly not for the first, or even second time. He heard the bass of the voice, deep in his head.

“Doctor lec-… Hannibal.” Will recognized, and spoke to make a statement of his awareness.

“Do not sit up so quickly.” Hannibal held a light hand against Will’s shoulder. “You may be concussed.” Doctor Lecter continued with an examination.

“I was..” Will thought. Will did not know what caused his fall. “I don’t know exactly what happened.” “We can figure that out after we make sure you are okay.” Hannibal consoled, while feeling Will’s neck as he turned it gently to each side.

With Hannibal’s help, Will sat up, “I think I’m going to be sick.” Will rushed out, touching his skull gingerly.

“Do you remember the last thing that happened?” Hannibal asked. Retrieving a dustbin that sat just under an end table close to him.

“I was checking the time… it was… three thirty?” Will glanced up at the clock, but felt a wave of nausea before he could see the time. He did vomit.

Hannibal soothingly rubbed Will’s back, a gesture Will found odd but comforting. Hannibal looked contemplative. “Let me escort you to the infirmary.”

He helped will to his feet, determining it was okay for Will to be upright again. “What caused you to fall Will?”

“I got dizzy.” Will lied.

“Come with me.” Hannibal coaxed further, Will held on to his arm when he felt uneven, and they walked together through the double doors that led to the court yard, pass the courtyard, into another set of door, a right turn, and into a door on their left. Will was taxed with just this simple walk. He realized he was exhausted. He hadn’t slept more than five hours in the last three days.

At the other side of the door, a reception desk with a young man seated behind it.

“My patient Will Graham has just had a concussion.” Hannibal spoke diligently to the young man. “I have already analyzed him, no need to call emergency services… Unless you think it necessary” Hannibal added at the end, not really a question, rather, a challenge.

The young man jumped up with some diligence, and led Will to a bed separated from other beds with curtains that hung on tracks from the ceiling. Hannibal and the young man helped deposit will onto the upright seating mattress.

“I will continue treating Mister Graham from here.” Hannibal dismissed the nurse from Will’s side.

“You’re a psychiatrist.” Will supplied confounded.

“I am, I am also a licensed doctor.” Hannibal took will’s vitals. He checked his pulse rate again, he tested Will’s reflexes “I have helped treat patients in this facility when the need arises.”

“How convenient for them.” Will let his head loll back onto the pillowy mattress, feeling now the strong ache from his close encounter with the floor. He tried not to let his pain be obvious.

“You are dehydrated.” Hannibal added to the list he was making on a chart he grabbed from the end of Will’s bed. “Are you sleeping well?”

“No.” Will almost whispered. "You know I'm not." He sounded terrible. He sounded like pain.

Hannibal continued to write. Another doctor came by to see what was happening with Will’s intake.

“Hannibal.” The woman greeted with a smile. “It’s great to see you back here.” She pulled her hair over the back of her neck so it all lay gathered on her left shoulder.

“It is an undeniable pleasure to see you again Doctor Grey.” Hannibal replied smoothly standing at her appearance. “I escorted Mister Graham here after his fall. He is slightly concussed.”

“And Dehydrated.” Will added. Everything about him was weak.

Hannibal glanced to his left to give Will a smile as well. “I will take care of Will here for his duration, I have no more sessions to hold this evening.”

“Fantastic” Doctor Grey approved. “If you need anything Hannibal, anything at all, don’t feel any hesitation to ask me personally.”

“I assure you I will not hesitate.” Hannibal almost purred. But his attention was back to the chart he was filling up with ink.

“Feel better Mister Graham.” Doctor Grey added with another smile.

“Thank you.” Will replied to be courteous but his eyes were almost closed already.

“I would advise against falling asleep now Will.” Hannibal’s timbre shot through Will’s entirety. “I need to do a few more tests if that is permissible?”

“Test away.” Will prompted.

Hannibal stalked down to the end of Will’s bed. He ran the top end of his pen over the top of Will’s right foot. “Can you feel that?” He asked.

“Yes.” Will forced himself not to jerk his leg back. He was tickled.

“And the other?” he asked, doing the same to his left.

“Yes.”

“If I toss this pen to you, do you think you can catch it?” Hannibal asked.

“Sports were never my strong point, but I think I can yes.” Will looked intently at Hannibal’s pen.

Hannibal raised the pen with a flourish, and underhandedly tossed it. Will caught it before it could flop on his lap. He looked at the pen. It was probably tungsten. Very heavy. It was monogrammed.

Will held the pen to the right side of the bed that Hannibal was returning to. “People who invest so much into writing implements usually believe what they have to say is very important.” Will included while Hannibal took the pen back.

“Is what I have to say unimportant?” Hannibal did not sound annoyed or offended, but genuinely curious.

“The pen befits you.” Will concluded.

“Thank you.” Hannibal wrote more down. “Would you mind recounting what happened before you fell?”

“I told you I was… dizzy.” Will didn’t know why he felt such hesitance to tell Doctor Lecter what he saw, what he experienced.

“You do not need to lie to me.” Hannibal asked softly. “I cannot help you if you don’t tell me the truth.”

“I’m not…” Will rubbed his face. “I had another dream last night… And I had a dream before I... fell and passed out.”

“What happened in these dreams?” Hannibal asked, flipping the paper of the chart over to write on.

“Last night, I was in my bed, at my home.” Will took a shaky breath. “I was… crushed by a thick black presence. It suffocated me, I was trying to scream, and it was choking me and pressing down on my body and.” Will shook his head, but regretted doing so immediately, and felt nauseous.

“And what happened this afternoon before our appointment?” Hannibal asked basely, yet kindly.

“I checked the time. The clock, just outside your office… The hands were going so fast, and the hands became blurred, the whirling of the hands… Took me, and I fell.” Will explained as well as he could.

“How often have you had these hallucinations?” Hannibal asked, looking up from the clipboard.

“Sometimes I pretend I’m sleeping when they happen.” Will confessed. “Sometimes… I don’t know if I’m awake.”

“How long has this been happening?” Hannibal asked quietly.

“The hallucinations started in November, last year. My… friend. She tried to help me, but she couldn’t. She suggested I go here.” Will explained. “I stopped having them when I started treatment here. But they’ve come back in the last three weeks.”

“This would be Alana?” Hannibal asked.

“Yes.” Will answered very quietly.

“How many times would you estimate have you hallucinated?”

“… Today makes the fifth time.”

“You should have told me, I cannot help you if you are not completely honest with me in the future Will.”

“If I didn’t know better, I would say you were mad at me?” Will asked, almost confused.

“I cannot properly diagnose and treat you if I do not know everything happening to you.”

Will felt the nausea again. And he took shaky breaths. He knew Hannibal was sure he was holding back, he took another breath, he came out with it. “These dreams… They don’t feel like mine. They feel like someone else's… I used to be able to control them before… When I liked… becoming murderers.” Will spoke in whisper. “I liked seeing the things they’d done, feeling like I was the one who did them.”

Hannibal stopped writing, but continued listening, waiting for will to continue.

“I could have told Jack Crawford no… But the idea of working cases again, it excited me…” Will pushed out of his mouth. “Every murder I saw in my head… It made me feel... powerful.”

“Nothing makes a person feel more powerful than holding life in their hands. And snuffing it out.” Hannibal offered.

“Is that what you’re supposed to say?” Will laughed incredulously.

“Forget what I am supposed to say.” Hannibal dismissed. “There is a truth of humanity. That truth is that the power to kill is euphoric.”

“What are you saying?” Will asked confused.

“You should not feel shame for enjoying what you feel, what you felt.”

“I’m sick.” Will denied, “I’m a sick person. Sane people don’t enjoy murder. And pain. And fear. So excuse me while I get a second opinion.” Will felt like his world was melting around him. Part of him, a large part, felt intense excitement, relief, and elation for Hannibal expressing… Comradery, understanding of the feelings he hid in shame.

“I wish you had told me sooner of these feelings Will.” Hannibal seemed to clam up. “ I think it best if you get some rest now.”

Will felt as if he were in a whirlpool. He did not know what to do or say. But he watched in some bewilderment when Hannibal stood. He patted Will’s leg as he sauntered to the door, telling him to feel better. Will craned his neck to see him talk to the receptionist before he left.

The receptionist stood then, he came over to will, setting up and IV on Will who was almost unconscious. “What did he tell you?” Will whispered.

“He said to start you on a drip, because you’re dehydrated.”

Chapter Four

Will slept for nineteen hours before he was rested enough to stay awake. In that time, Doctor Grey woke him to check up on Will, after which he slept again. His dreams were feverish, uncomfortable, but routine. He dreamt of Hannibal. Hannibal with a scalpel. He dreamt of Alana. Alana naked. Will, Will was naked. He put his hands on her waist, rubbing his thumb up and down on her side. He dreamt, he bent his head to kiss her, her lips like crushed velvet, warm, and pliant. He grabbed her to himself, his body pressed against hers. His eyes closed. He dreamt. Then his eyes opened, this time, of his own doing. Will felt like a shredded piece of meat.

"Good morning Mister Graham." A cheery voice greeted him, pulling curtains back. Doctor Geraldine Grey came to him.

"Hello Doctor Grey." Will greeted, his voice incredibly hoarse and thick from sleep.

"How do you feel?" She asked, sweetly, yet officious.

"Fuzzy, drained, but not terrible." Will replied, rubbing his eyes.

"Well, good news, we're letting you go today."

"That is good news." Will sat up in the hospital bed.

"Doctor Lecter is writing your fall up to chronic fatigue and dehydration. You need to get more rest Mister Graham." She chastened.

"I think I just caught up on all of the rest I've missed." Will spoke softly, a headache brewing in his mind.

"You certainly did." Doctor Grey murmured cutting the wrist band off of Will, then putting the scissors back into a small lock box. "Do you often talk in your dreams?"

"I don't know. I'm usually asleep for them." Will stood, straightening his shirt.

A nurse came to Will's side, "I'll take you back to your room."

Will sighed at being back to escorts, but realized the necessity of it.

"Which is your room?" the nurse asked with impatience.

"130" Will answered.

They set off, it was a short walk. Will was lying on his bed after only a few minute. It was Two fifteen in the afternoon, two hours and forty five minutes till his appointment with Doctor Lecter. Will had no idea what he was going to say. He elected to ignore any planning for the session, and picked up a book that lay with the spine cracked on his bedside table. Merely a half hour of reading, and Will was asleep again. *****

Will woke, but he heard, he was not alone. A small sound of pen on paper. “Writing important things?” Will asked.

“Quite important.” Hannibal agreed.

“What is the time?” Will grumbled, turning at the neck to see his digital clock.

“Four fifteen in the afternoon.” Hannibal replied.

“I’m late for our appointment.” Will said disdainfully.

“Which I normally deem very rude.” Hannibal agreed. “But with your extenuating circumstances, I think we can forgive that.”

“It’s nice to know you include forgiveness in your classification of ‘human nature’” Will broached the topic carefully.

Hannibal set his notepad on Will’s desk, he stood, he closed Will’s door.

“Tell me Will, what would you define as human nature?” Hannibal sat back on the hard plastic chair.

“…That’s an incredibly large question.” Will sat up on his bed, fixing the sheet, making things a bit more formal than they were.

“All I ask for is your opinion.”

“I don’t know how to describe... What do you want me to say, Love?” Will finished.

“Human nature is all encompassing. It includes opposing traits, kindness and cruelty, greed and generosity.” Hannibal spoke matter of factly. He was a professor for a moment. “But human nature is animalistic, it is divine.”

“Are you saying… Murder is divine.”

“You told me you can see yourself in anyone.” Hannibal crossed his legs. “Can you see yourself in me?”

“I… Can.” Will admitted.

“As I can see myself in you.” Hannibal replied.

“Reveling in human nature includes acceptance of the darker parts of ourselves.” Will spoke from Hannibal’s point of view. “Our desires are valid, because our very nature is human nature.”

Hannibal sat silent, listening to Will, then spoke. “I believe you and I are of the same cloth.” Hannibal spoke at last.

“I don’t know how true that is.” Will felt himself sweating.

“We will find out, won’t we?” Hannibal suggested. He replaced his notepad on his lap. “Until we do, how are you Will?”

Will felt like he was tossed on a choppy sea. “Do you propose I ignore your exposition Hannibal?” Will increasingly testy.

“This is your time. We can talk about whatever you wish.”

“You are telling me murder is acceptable.” Will felt bewildered yet strangely comforted.

“Violent urges are a part of humanity. It is normal to think about murder. What matters is the control we impose on ourselves.”

“How is your self-control Doctor Lecter?” Will smirked to himself.

“Marvelous.” Hannibal also smiled. “I never hurt anyone I do not intend to.”

“Part of the reason I am here, was self-control.” Will admitted.

“I have read in Doctor Bloom’s records of your history involving self-control.” Hannibal nodded.

“I have ‘violent tendencies’.” Will supplied.

“What others would label ‘passion’.” Hannibal attempted to make it sound more appealing. “Tell me about Doctor Bloom.” Hannibal requested.

“She’s a friend of mine.” Will began. “A friend of the Bureau. She was helping me.”

“She was not officially your psychiatrist.” Hannibal supplied, information he already held.

“No.” Will agreed. “She and I talked… It was a favor to Jack Crawford. A way for him to ease his own guilt for what he was responsible for.”

“From what you have told me previously, the two of you have more than talked.”

Will blushed.

“Do not be embarrassed. Attractions do often arise between patients and doctors.” Hannibal had written little in the last several minutes. “Alana and you were never hindered by the relationship limitations that often stifle such attractions.”

“You asked me to write more in my journal.” Will stood, stepping lightly on his way to his desk. He stood to the side of Hannibal, who was seated in front of his desk. He picked up the scholastic composition book from the top of the table. Will turned back around and sat back on his bed.“I wrote about Alana.” Will cracked the book open, but only glanced at his own words. “I wrote about the… incident that led me here.”

“Would you care to recount the experience?” Hannibal wrote.

Will sighed, but let his mind drift back. “January, I was sick… I was working an especially gruesome case... Alana had warned Jack not to ask me to assist on any more cases, but we were so close to catching the Chesapeake Ripper. I felt it would be negligent to put my well being before that case.” Will took a shaky breath. “I must have gone too far into the ripper’s head. I started confusing my reality with his. There must have been a line I crossed somewhere in my mind.” Will rested his forehead against his palm, propped up by an elbow on his knee.

“I started losing days at a time. I woke up in places I didn’t remember. People I knew wanted to discuss conversations I didn’t remember having…” Will ran a hand through his hair. “No one knew the difference. But Alana knew something was wrong.”

Hannibal sat mute, not daring to interrupt Wills recount.

“I got lost in the ripper’s mind. Alana found that out before I did.” She kept prodding me… when I wasn’t me… I don’t know exactly how it happened… I didn’t know but when I woke up, or…. I came back to myself, there was blood.”

Hannibal kept silent, knowing the toll it takes on a person to recount horrors in their life.

“My blood, Alana’s blood.” Will shook mildly, limbs almost vibrating. “I had cut her, not fatally, but she was unable to stand. She had shot me, I don’t know which happened first, but I doubt Alana would have subdued me like she did if I wasn’t going to kill her.”

“Alana’s notes refer to not just violent tendencies, but perhaps to the emergence of an alternate personality.” Hannibal informed.

“Like DID?” Will almost gaped. He paused in thought. “How was this information withheld from me?”

“I believe Alana was reluctant to bring forth her conclusions, nor even believe them herself as most psychologists do not believe in or diagnose most dissociative disorders.” Hannibal proposed.

“The encephalitis, it made me forget what I had said and done… I wasn’t vacant, I was just forgetting...” Will grasped, but what Hannibal described seemed disturbingly likely to him in light of his last year.

“I believe your relationship with Alana caused her to withhold the information. She wished to paint you in a light that would prove most positive to the Bureau, blaming the actions on an alternate personality would have been far more legally challenging than blaming your encephalitis.” Hannibal spread his hypothesis out for will. “She hid her pre-diagnosis deep in her notes, however, as I said, I do not believe she thought it was true.”

“I can’t believe she would neglect to say anything about it to me at least.” Will felt rage build up in his stomach, tightening his throat preparing a scream, but his voice trained and was calm.

“She experienced an illogical and emotional response.” Hannibal attempted to defuse Will. “I am sure she is living with doubts.”

Will seethed, and his anger felt like the break of a wave across his face with each realization of both affection and deceit on her part.

“Will.” Hannibal called.

“I’m sorry.” Will snapped himself out of the emotion.

“Please relax.” Hannibal requested.

“I...” Will began, and paused in thought. He thought about every time he couldn’t remember himself, What had he done. He thought of the people he may have hurt. He was unsure now of himself. In his blood there was fear, and it sped through his body as quickly as his thoughts races through his mind.

“I want to play for you a recording I made of our last session.” Hannibal said. “It is proof that I needed to obtain before I could come to you with my speculations of your disorder.”

“...You have a recording of…?” Will was dizzy again rubbing his head. “Play it...Now, please.” Will demanded.

Chapter Five

“I see myself in everyone” Will spoke, feeling agitated, rubbing his head, his hair. Will felt a falling blackness, like his feet were hobbled where he stood and he was no longer aware of anything. An ego death, No dreams for Will, no sleeping.

“Are you okay Will?” Hannibal asked to the slumped hull of Will in the chair.

“I’m fine, Doctor Lecter.” Will looked around noting the room with vague dislike and overt boredom.

“Do I see myself in Ann” Will pondered with mock amusement, wits returned and brightness in his face that was unlike the tormented man from seconds before. “I’d like to think I am a tad bit more charismatic than her, but I do see we both have proclivities for… smashing.” He smiled at the end.

Hannibal sat more forward in his chair, studying the face of his patient. Will studied back, he made eye contact.

“Your eyes are just dreamy Doc.” Will sighed holding his chin up with the palm of his hand like cartoon infatuation.

“I assume I am no longer talking to Will Graham as I know him.” Hannibal almost asked. He still looked at the man’s face.

“I am Will Graham.” Will sat back with a dainty laugh. “Will likes to think of me as his id, though of course almost every theory of Freud has been proven wrong and people should really stop idolizing the old croc.”

“The id is characterized by the need for instant gratification, seeking only pleasure.” Hannibal engaged in a staring contest, determined to not be first to look away in discomfort. “Does this typify you?”

With very few spaces between his words, “Of course it doesn’t, Will loves to be dramatic, I would not get very far if I was a lustful animal that devours….everything.”

“You refer to Will as a separate person, yet you have claimed to be Will.”

“I am Will. A part of Will. He knows about me, though he doesn’t know he knows… yet.” Will laughed with nothing being particularly funny. “Tell our good Will about me won’t you?”

“What would you like me to say?” Hannibal was writing.

“Oh, let him know he can stop being so coy with me.” The way Will spoke was a threat like a sing song socialite.

“Coy in which ways William?”

“…I like William. The name, Call me William.”

“Very well, William. However I would like an answer to my question if you would.”

“I get tired of being ignored doctor.” William’s semi-sad inflection was never confused for true.

“Will doesn’t listen to me, I can’t talk to him. I should have a say in what we do and… well, a say in what we say.”

“What say do you wish to have?” Hannibal continued his therapy.

“He never lets me answer questions!” William exclaimed. “I know he hears me, he elects to ignore me.”

“Has Will ever spoken back to you?” Hannibal asked, as If going down a checklist.

“He plays coy, like I said.” William reiterated. “But when I give him…suggestions” he smirked “I can tell he’s listening.”

“What do you suggest to him?”

“That’s a very personal question.” William decreed. “Will gets so frustrated, he could solve many problems with the letter opener you keep locked in your desk drawer. The drawer on the top right.”

“What problems does Will have?”

“The orderly with the tattoo behind his ear.” William’s face turned dark.

“What has he done to Will?” Hannibal.

“He is very rude to Will.” William gossiped. “I’ve told him several times, it would be so easy to remove him.”

“To kill him?” Hannibal clarified.

“To remove him, yes.” William smiled.

“How is he rude to Will?” Hannibal sought clarification.

“He does not like us. He thrusts the lunch tray in our face when he serves the meals. He creates lewd nicknames for Will.” William constructed a list of grievances. “He is also sloppy, dirty, and makes passes at the female patients.”

“I will see to it that this orderly is disciplined properly.” Hannibal promised. “Thank you for bringing this to my attention.”

“It is my pleasure.” William cooed. He stood then, he paced slowly along the wall looking at diplomas, paintings, drawings and the clutter that decorated the

office. “What are your hopes for Will’s outcome?”

“I hope to help Will become the master of his own emotions and empathy. To help him control his actions, and to accept the trauma he has experienced.” Hannibal paused.

“I would like that very much.” William sat back in his seat.

“This will be difficult for...Will.”

“…They leave their mark on Will.” William blurted with no preamble. “I am all of those marks. I’m like a scar from the lash on Will’s back.” Euphorically, William explained like reading a love poem, “Every killer he became was like a crack on his skin, and I stitched them back together.”

“Are you holding him together? or are you a sore reminder.” Hannibal spoke quietly, prompting an answer, but received none. ----

Will sat quietly, a burning in his neck, down his spine. He was unnerved, distraught, yet shockingly unsurprised. “In the future, I request full disclosure from you.” Will declared.

“I will be happy to oblige you” Hannibal conceded to Will.

“It’s the strangest thing I think I have ever experienced…” Will said after a minutes of silence. “To be a person, who has another person in him.”

“I can only imagine how it feels for you.” Hannibal sympathized. “Our discussion now however is what course of treatment we are to devise for you.”

“…. Attempt to join together…. William and me.” Will felt a sick panic recalling everything he had ever read about DID.

“This process would take much time, you would continue therapy outside of institutionalization.”

“Would I continue to work with you during this…process?” Will questioned.

“If you wish.” Hannibal replied kindly. “I have an office in my home a half hour away, I often see patients there, and I am familiar in treating dissociative disorders.”

“I don’t know when I will be released from this place…” Will replied almost mournfully. “I am sure with the caliber of what I’ve done I shouldn’t expect less than another year of therapy here.”

“Not if I deem it unnecessary.” Hannibal tutted. “With my recommendation for release you may be out of here within the next few months.”

Will sat thinking for a few moments what this meant for his life, his sanity. He debated if he would allow Hannibal to become as pivotal a figure in his life… An adult life of therapists, and Doctor Hannibal Lecter was the first he felt comfortable in association with.

“Within that time, we will stabilize you. No more lost time.” Hannibal smiled like a mother promising her boy a sweet.

“I have to say I don’t feel like any amount of months is enough time to…I think you overestimate my ability.” Will confided.

“I have never seen a more intelligent patient than I have you Will.” Hannibal praised. “I have no doubt in your capability.”

Will had his reservations, large ones. He also dreamed of leaving this place. To be home with his dogs, rebuilding his life, whatever fragments remained to assemble there.

Hannibal waited in pure silence for Will to think, watching the expressions in his brow and stiff lips.

“Alright.” Will permissed.

Chapter Six

Hannibal had Will removed from group therapy sessions. He had told Will “Nothing can be gained from group discussions, they may only provoke William to show himself where he is not wanted.” Will understood the necessity, and in fact was very glad to cut out the stress of group sessions. He always found them uncomfortable. Will began seeing Hannibal twice daily to fill the therapeutic gap.

The sessions Hannibal and Will held left Will battered and emotionally tender, but he always looked forward to their next meeting, every fraction of progress made was a step closer to the door of Willow Breeze.

Will’s routine was little changed beyond the extra session. Will woke before breakfast every day, Hannibal escorted him to the office, a necessity as patients were not allowed to be out of their rooms before hours of operation. Their session in the morning set the mood of the day. Often Hannibal gave him an idea to think of during the time between sessions. They tackled the issue at the new time they arranged, Seven pm.

It had been five days since Hannibal had spoken with William.

It was seven thirty, Will had not slept the last two nights. ----

“I would like to try hypnosis to help you and William communicate.” Hannibal was pacing from his desk to his auxiliary chair, the leather crunched a bit as he sat across from Will. “Ideally, you will be conscious, and able to allow William to speak with me.”

“Don’t you think we’re jumping in too quickly?” Will was hesitant to agree to something so terrifying.

“Not at all.” “Have you ever experienced sleep paralysis?” Hannibal asked.

“I have, only twice in my life.” Will shivered silently at the memory of trying to scream, trying to thrash and having no control of his body.

“Though undoubtedly terrifying, the treatment I am suggesting is similar, however it would be controlled, and you would be aware this was happening to you.” Hannibal turned his head to ask a question. “Do you think you would be able to remain calm if I talk you through the process?”

“I’m sure, knowing why it was happening to me, I would be able to keep calm.” Will replied. Anxious.

“I know your strength Will.” Hannibal began a monologue. “I know your endurance and am amazed by it. Your perseverance is what has kept you through these awful experiences. By this time a man of intelligence and toleration lesser than yours would have become unreachable.”

“Thank you.” Will spoke in a quiet tone.

“Do we have permission to proceed with this treatment?”

“Yes”

Hannibal rose, he invited Will to stand as well. “If you would.” He gestured Will to the sumptuous fainting chair that seemed so unobtrusive in its perimeter location.

Will moved weakly to the sofa, and laid himself softly across the cushion.

Hannibal moved and turned his desk chair to be perpendicular to Will where he lay. “For this to work.” Hannibal coached while they both settled, “I must have your abandon. You must follow what I say, and listen to my voice.”

“I can do that.” Will assured. “A few months ago, I don’t know if I would have been able to, but I can now.”

“May we begin now?” Hannibal asked, courteous.

“Yes.”

“Please close your eyes Will.” Hannibal's tone was very soft, minutely accented and comforting. “Think of the comfort of your home in Wolf Trap.” Hannibal had a hand on the pulse of Will’s wrist.

“The smell of it as you open the door, familiar, but apparent to you. Your dogs are sleeping, very comfortably.”

Will found it easy to be lost in his memory, he used this very tactic on himself to escape from Willow Breeze when he felt it necessary.

“You pour yourself a modest glass of whiskey. It’s a lovely caramel color.” Hannibal felt the small subtle drop in heart rate. Will was easy to calm, like a lamb being led into the gate. He was excited to exact his will on the other man. “You sit in your chair. It’s very comfortable.”

Will saw it all in his head, it was not hard to remember these comforts.

“You may drink your whiskey now. It’s smooth going down is it not? Very good quality.” Hannibal smiled when he saw the ease on Will’s face. He wished he could give him these comforts now, in waking life.

“Your chair is so comfortable, you can not help but feel drowsy.” Hannibal initiated. “In fact, it would be perfectly fine if you decided to take a nap here. No one needs anything from you. All you have to do is give yourself over to relaxation.”

Will was aware, he was not really home. But it was so rewarding to pretend it was his living room he was in. His chair he laid on. He found he was in fact slipping away. He was in void almost. A soft, velveteen cushion from which he never wanted to be shook awake from. “Really Doctor.” A snarky voice from Will’s mouth. “Hypnosis?”

Will heard the voice like it was coming from under the door in the next room. It had his voice, but it was not his. It sounded higher, lofty almost. He decided he did not care. He kept comfortable. Reluctance to wake up.

“Of course I’m not complaining, It’s lovely to see you again Hannibal Lecter.”

“The pleasure is all mine.” Hannibal’s voice came in like someone turned a lamp on in Will’s room. The warm candle-lit glow casting over him.

“It was smart of you to put will in his sitting room.” William stretched Will’s arms. “Next time, perhaps, fly fishing?”

“Right now, Will craves the comfort of home.” Hannibal explained. “It seemed the kindest thing to give him that.”

“Will trusts you more than he thinks he does.” William mused. “He didn’t even think you might put him in a bad spot.”

“What do you mean by that William?” Hannibal was genuinely curious.

“You know what I mean.” William grinned with mischievous glint. “You could easily have talked him into bad dreams. Stuffed him into a trunk and locked the door.” William kept talking “Yes, I know, Will doesn’t know what kind of man you are. I know.”

“I have shared much of myself with Will.” Hannibal disagreed. “He knows he may trust me.”

“He knows what you’ve told him.”

“Which has been the truth.” Hannibal contended.

“Not the whole truth, nothing but the truth, so. Help. You. God?” William punctuated.

Will listened to this exchange, growing discontent in his chair.

“I would tell Will information if it was pertinent. I cannot be faulted for not being an open book.” Hannibal talked to William like he would a child who did not understand social norms.

“We’re not here to discuss you.” William concluded the topic.

Hannibal’s brow twitched. But he dismissed the anger. “No we are not.”

“We’re here to ‘Help me and William communicate.’”

Hannibal smiled, however almost imperceptibly. “Did you draw that information from Will? Or have you been listening along?”

“I hear everything Will hears.” William boasted. “I’m like the little devil on his shoulder. Right next to his ear.”

“An interesting analogy.”

“Don’t become so excited, you are aware he usually ignores me.” William sighed as though disappointed in Will.

“And that is why you take matters into your own hands” Hannibal suggested.

“Very astute doctor!” William exclaimed. “I would say you are correct. I have to do everything myself.”

Will sat up in his chair, he had begun tuning out the man, but now he stood, and walked to the door the sound of William’s voice resonated from.

“Sit down.” William spoke in an authoritarian voice. The Sound came in like a PA from speakers into Will’s ears.

“I am seated.” Hannibal assured William.

“No no no no, not you doctor.” William held a hand up just to wave it away.

“You are speaking to Will now?”

“Isn’t this messy?” William laughed. “This three way call is not working.”

Will had the sensation of his ears popping, the silence ringing. He couldn’t hear William in the other room, nor the sound of Hannibal any longer. He felt trapped and panicked.

“I told Will he would be conscious for the duration of the treatment.” Hannibal chided.

“We both know that was not going to work.” William was no longer smiling. “He’s fine though. Still in his room.”

“I have no doubt he is.” Hannibal let go of Will’s wrist finally.

William sat up, being released. “Will doesn’t know what you are.” He looked up to Hannibal. “If you were worried about that sort of thing.”

“What is it that I am?” Hannibal sat still, posture giving nothing away.

“Killer.” William replied almost like a pet name.

Hannibal responded with silence.

“Again so coy!” William exclaimed sweetly. “I don’t know what kind of monster you are, but I know one when I’m… this close to one.” William fawned.

Hannibal stood up, he moved a few feet back to his desk. He turned off the tape recorder. “Does Will know?”

“If he has not figured it out now… Your hints have not exactly been subtle.” William tutted at Will’s ignorance.

“In Will… I saw a kindred spirit. I saw a person like myself in many ways.” Hannibal admitted. “What I was really looking at was you.”

“I’m touched.” William held a hand to his heart.

“What I want, however” Hannibal continued. “Is Will. A cohesive person, in tune with the powerful conscious that is located in you.”

“You want to join us.” William knew.

“Will splintered the two of you, he was unable to accept the feelings he had, the trauma of it forced his guilty desires for killing into you. You belong with Will, and Will belongs with me.”

“Do you love Will?” William teased.

“I have grown incredibly fond of him. I believe I can help Will be the most he is able to be.”

“I assume you would like to keep Will unaware?” William was more serious than he had been at any time previously.

“…For now it would be best for him.” -

Will came back to himself very slowly. He opened his eyes to a mix between his sitting room, Hannibal’s office, and missing space. He was in his chair still, but he knew, he was on Hannibal’s sofa. Will closed his eyes.

“Will.” A voice called.

Will blinked several times, attempting to clear away his home, and become aware.

“What happened?” Will’s voice was hoarse from the tension he was still holding on to.

“William shut you out of the conversation.” Hannibal informed.

“I was… trapped in the room.” Will sat up, shaky from his prior fear. He felt angry now. He felt violated in ways he did not know existed.

“Relax, please Will.” Hannibal.

“How am I supposed to be relaxed?” Will laughed incredulously. “I don’t have control of my own body. None of this therapy is working.”

“You must give it time. You are progressing more than you are aware.” Hannibal soothed.

“I don’t see an end to this Hannibal.” Will choked. “I can’t.”

“Please, try to trust me.” Hannibal asked.

Will had a small strike of electricity in his thoughts. He could see Hannibal not from his mind but from Williams mind. Only briefly, everything was distorted with a film. A film of hatred

that he knew well with new eyes. “I… do trust you.” The artificial hatred he saw was gone in a moment.

There was an awkward silence between them. A rest for both of them, till Hannibal spoke. “I’m proud of you for attempting this today. I recognize how daunting a task it was.”

“Thank you.” Will got the words out, but he was fading… he felt fatigue like a smothering hand. “I’m correct in assuming we will be… employing hypnosis often?”

“As long as it is necessary to gain control your transitions.” Hannibal explained. “Eventually you will not need to be hypnotized to contact William. Eventually, you both shall be conscious in the same mind.”

“Would it be okay if we cut the session short tonight?” Will rubbed his eyes hard enough to see spots.

“Are you unwell?” Hannibal seemed to leap into action.

“I haven’t slept in…. days. About two of them.” Will fought with himself to keep his eyelids from meeting. “Every time I close my eyes to sleep, I hear a crash, like someone is knocking trinkets from a mantle.”

“I am loathe to prescribe sleeping aids.” Hannibal stood and walked to his cabinet. “They are habit forming, and impede therapeutic techniques.”

“I’m not asking for sleeping pills.” Will answered irritated. “But my mind is tormenting itself out of a night’s sleep.”

Hannibal opened a drawer in his standing cabinet. A small tin box in his hand on his return. “This is chamomile tea, laced with melatonin”

“Do you think that will help?” Will asked, interest piqued.

“I find it works for myself, as well as for several of my other patients over the years.” Hannibal handed the container to Will. “I dried the flowers myself, after misting them with the chemical.”

“I don’t have a kettle in my room.” Will replaced the lid after looking at the dried buds and stems.

“Perhaps a field trip to the kitchen is in order then?” Hannibal smiled to Will in a way that let Will know he had no real choice.

Chapter Seven

At Eight Forty in the evening, there were no patients in the dining hall, there was a lone man scrubbing a countertop, a mop and bucket not too far from him. Hannibal coasted through the space with a self-assured gait. He opened the magnetic lock of the kitchen door with a swipe of his identification card, holding the door for Will to enter before him.

“Thank you.” Will replied to the gesture.

“Of course.” Hannibal replied. He led will to the line.

The Janitor with his headphones in took a half out, till he recognized the man, and nodded his head “Doctor.” Then replaced the piece in his ear, and continued his job.

Hannibal rummaged through the cooking instruments, he loosed a small saucepan from the hook it was elevated on and filled the pot halfway full of tap water. He turned the knob on the stove, igniting the ring of flames.

Will retrieved a plastic cup from the service station, where he knew they would be. He held the cup that was heavy in his tired hands. Hannibal snooped around the kitchen while he waiting for the water to boil and Will watched Hannibal. Hannibal was inspecting the supplies and the cleanliness.

“Do you cook?” Will asked, making small talk.

“It is a passion of mine.” Hannibal replied, lifting the knives from the block, setting them back in. “I cook for friends now mostly.”

Will felt nervous jittering energy simultaneously with dampening exhaustion. The water was softly bubbling.

Hannibal strode back to the stovetop to see the progress. Will passed Hannibal the cup he found. “Thank you.”

Hannibal opened the tin that sat on the counter, he scooped with a spoon that was already in the container two small heaps of dried flowers and sprinkled them into the water. “I am sorry if you generally take sugar in your tea,” Hannibal began “but a stimulant is not what you need at the moment.”

“It’s fine.” Will watched him spoon in the tea, he rubbed his brow, a headache paining him. “I can do without.”

Hannibal lifted a small mesh strainer from a hook above him.

“Not much time is necessary for the tea to infuse.” Hannibal explained as he watched the boiling.

The water turned a light color in the stainless pot. Will watched it intently, the color to him seemed to shimmer, it turned black slowly as if ink were dripping into the liquid and slowly dissipating before him. “The… tea.” Will whispered segmented while he felt the air around him become thick.

“What was that?” Hannibal held the strainer over the cup, poised to pour the drink through.

“N… Nothing.” Will lied.

“Do you recall your promise to be truthful with me Will?” Hannibal spoke measuredly.

“I do…” Will hesitated. “I just don’t think I need to bother you with this.”

“I am your therapist. You can’t bother me, it is my job to help you.”

“The water, the tea.” Will sighed. “It looked like black dye was dripping into it.”

“What were you thinking about when you saw this?” Hannibal drove.

“I was thinking … if this tea works, and I’m going to sleep.” Will spoke matter of factly. “I’m going to have nightmares.”

“Would you say dreams are a trigger for you?” Hannibal

“I know for a fact they are.” Will was agitated again.

Hannibal picked up the saucepan again and poured the drink. He handed the cup to Will.

Will took a sip, found it not unpleasant.

“Your chronic fatigue and sleepless nights are no doubt contributing to the severity of your nightmares.” Hannibal watched Will’s throat swallow. “Catch up on your rest, and we can make better progress in preventing hallucinations.”

Will nodded while he took another sip. He watched Hannibal wash his utensils. He felt no more tired than he did before.

Hannibal dried the pot and dropped the towel in a soiled linen basket. “May I take you back to your room now?” Hannibal asked.

“Yes, please” Will replied courteously.

Hannibal led them through the enclosed courtyard in the warming humid spring evening.

Will had finished his cup of tea on the journey, he awkwardly held the empty plastic container. Hannibal opened the door for Will again. Will was astoundingly happy to see his bed. -

Will’s dream was tangled, messy, and deceitful. He woke several times. He turned over and over and over. On his right hip, he settled. Will opened his eyes,

Hannibal was still seated at Will's desk, facing him. He did not look at Hannibal's eyes. He heard the bass vibration of Hannibal talking to him, but he did not listen to the words.

Will didn't know he was sleeping again till he woke once more and saw Hannibal steeped in blood. Red arterial sprays across his face with soaked patches from an ooze on the cuffs of his shirt.

Will shook awake with a spasm that originated in the base of his neck. He sat up quickly, and looked at the chair that sat vacant save for a small piece of note paper with a curly writing

"Good morning Will, I am reluctant to say I must cancel our morning appointment today. I will however see you this evening for our secondary session. I apologize for any inconvenience this causes you, and I hope you can forgive my rudeness. Please attempt to rest as much as you are able to. Till this evening, -Hannibal Lecter"

Will felt fleeting panic, and wondered if Hannibal had seen something derailing in Will. He thought about the blood soaked cuffs, and felt violated.

Will cradled himself in his own arms and lay back down on his damp sheets and pondered. He hated his illness. Will rarely left himself to self-pity, but it was invading him now like someone had opened a morphine drip. He wished he could cry, but he had no energy to do even that. He lay rolled in on himself till he fell asleep again.

-

"Well Hello sleeping beauty!" a derisive voice laughed in Will's doorway. "I wish I could lay in bed all day"

Will looked up with gooey tired eyes at the orderly with the tattoo behind his ear.

"Damn, you're a sweaty dude." He laughed.

Will just glared with absent emotions waiting for the orderly to leave as he usually did.

"So why you think you can miss meals then?"

"It was an accident." Will sat up on his mattress.

"You know I can get in trouble if too many of you in this wing miss your meals." The orderly sniffed, picking his nails.

"I was catching up on sleep." Will gave short answers, hoping the orderly would leave him alone.

"Ain't got nothing to do with you and that faggoty doctor walking around at night like you own the place?" The man sneered.

"What?" Will laughed, but it hid an alarm in the base of his brain

“James told me about you two, making tea or something.” The orderly was fully in Will’s room now, he was rubbing his hands.

“If you have a problem with Doctor Lecter’s therapy, you should probably take it up with him and leave me alone.” Will attempted to remain calm.

“But I’m talking to you.” The orderly persisted.

A mellow voice in Will’s head whispered. Will ignored it.

Instead, Will pulled a persona from his hat of personalities. “You probably shouldn’t fuck with me.” His voice mean. “Don’t you know what I’m in here for?”

“You’re not so tough.” The orderly stepped in closer. He was three feet from Will.

Will’s muscles tensed like tuning a new violin string.

“Especially when you’re crying like a bitch in your sleep.” The orderly teased.

Will sighed exasperatedly. He stood up. The orderly then tensed expecting a blow, but turned his head and watched Will walk out of the room.

He briskly walked down the hall to the courtyard without stopping. He sat down on the bench he usually occupied. He lowered his head and wrapped his arms around his body. It took momentous control to keep his breathing low, and his mind in the same place it had been. He practiced the techniques he and Hannibal had discussed, he thought of comforts, he kept an even breath.

Will uncoiled and looked up to the warming sky, the sun that was just turning its attention back to him. The swirling snake-like feeling of savagery left his mind gradually. What was left, was manageable anger.

Will didn’t know what to do with himself. He could not dwell on the cruelty of the nameless orderly. He closed his eyes, dug through his vault of memories as he was want to do in occasions when he needed distraction. The best thing that came to his mind was his dogs. He took himself back to how it was to navigate his home when they were all vying for his attention. In his mind, he patted their heads, and scratched their ears. It felt real enough to Will that he could become lost in this small happiness. -

Will came back to himself a few minutes later when his stomach groaned at him. He was keenly hungry.

The courtyard had filled up considerably during the time he was lost in thought. Anne sat next to him, her head tilted down but in his direction. She was looking at the space between his shoes. He didn’t bother saying hello, but he thought it.

Will walked warily to the cafeteria. He did not relish another confrontation.

The low population of Willow Breeze meant there was never a line for food. Generally at the end of service, meals were made to order. Will observed the dry erase board that displayed

options available. He felt like a child asking for macaroni and cheese, but in his experiences, it was his best option. The server fetched a portion from the row of warmers, one of which was turned on and functional. He also received a roll, and a serving of previously frozen broccoli.

Will wished he had brought a book with him. He sat down with a plastic spoon. He glanced at the clock on the wall, it was 4:48. He looked down at the congealing cheese sauce. It was not a late lunch as he had planned, it was an early dinner. Will felt a chill down his neck, blooming along his shoulders and back. “How long have I been gone for?” He thought to himself.

He attempted to recreate his day. He woke. It was…. 10? Will tried to remember what the clock said, but he could not. He set his spoon down on his platter. The food in his stomach turned into a lead sinker. Will felt absurdly groggy. He walked shakily with legs that felt taxed with their function, he tipped the food into a waste bin. He scuffed down to his room again.

Will sat on his desk chair. He saw swirling behind his eyes, he heard the echo of voices but could not discern them. Will remembered a smell, like damp mulch and muddy water. Will Looked at the clock behind him. It was 4:55. He relaxed himself again. Breathing even. He convinced himself everything was normal, in efforts to make it that way. He closed his eyes, pretending the all was well.

Will opened his eyes, feeling much calmer. He looked down and the knuckles of his right hand were bleeding steadily, oozing like a viscous lava from several gashes along the top ridge of his bone. Will squeezed his eyes, to make the apparition go, but he looked again and the gore remained. He lifted his hand for his eyes to be closer, but winced and made a small grunt. He looked around the room for evidence, what had he done.

The papers of his notebook were ripped out, and ripped further into a snow like pile on the floor. There were red smudges on the painted brick wall, Will analyzed these, the blood was very fresh. This had happened only moments ago. Some of his things, the plastic cup from the previous night, a book, and a stick of graphite he used to write were on the floor at the other side of the room.

Will would have shook, but he retained the strange calm that he brought on himself. He looked at the clock. It was 6:50. He knew, ten minutes until his appointment with Doctor Lecter. He took a shirt from his drawer, he held it to his tender hand, as softly as he could. He let the blood drip on the cotton instead of the floor.

Will closed his door behind him, with the light out in attempts to dissuade anyone from checking on him in there. He walked briskly, avoiding any orderlies if he could help it, keeping his hand secret.

Hannibal’s door was unlocked, but closed, Will let himself in quietly.

Hannibal’s head snapped up at the sound of the door, and he assessed Will very quickly. He stood and saw to him.

“What happened to you Will?” Hannibal asked with little emotion.

“I punched a wall.” Will acted sheepish.

“This is unlike you.” Hannibal knew what he asked.

“It wasn’t me who did the punching.” Will almost smirked, surprising himself. He found Hannibal’s worry delightful.

“I have a first aid kit.” Hannibal proclaimed. “Please allow me.” He gestured Will to the fainting chair against the wall behind his desk.

He opened a drawer with a key that was on a small ring in his pocket. A small metal box, Hannibal unlatched the top. He set a gauze, tape, and other bandaging supplies on his desk and replaced the box. He did not lock the drawer yet.

Hannibal saturated a square of cotton with hydrogen peroxide, he dabbed the chemical into will’s cuts.

Will felt vacant. “It’s getting worse for me.”

“What happened to you today to make you feel so?”

“I wouldn’t know. I was barely conscious today.” Will watched Hannibal clean out his knuckles. “My body went out to play while I was… Gone.”

“What happened to you today?” Hannibal used the remainder of the gauze roll on him.

“There is an orderly,” Will began, Hannibal perked at the mention. “He seems to have it out for me… I have ignored him well, but he tried to get me to altercate with him.”

“What did you do?” Hannibal asked, not assuming any guilt.

“I tried to scare him off, after ignoring him did not work.” Will explained. “I put on my mean face, but he was excited to fight.”

Hannibal ripped some tape from a spool, and fastened the ends of the wrap to itself.

“Did you fight him?” Hannibal asked, giving Will his hand back to him.

“No.” Will sighed. “I was able to leave the room. I calmed myself down enough. I went to the courtyard.”

“I am sorry you encountered this menace again.” Hannibal packed his supplies back into the metal case. “I feel partly responsible. As promised, I reported this orderly to the nurse’s station, his name is Joshua Small. Unfortunately he was not let go from his position.”

“I’ll go down tomorrow to the nurses station, tell them what happened.” Will persisted “I’m sure they would dismiss him.”

“I believe you should allow me to handle this for you Will.” Hannibal asserted.

Will was taken aback, “Why is that?”

“As unfair as it may be,” Hannibal began, “The matter would be taken far more seriously from me, than it would be from you.”

“I often forget the difference in status.” Will understood Hannibal’s point of view.

“In fact, it would be best for you if you do not report the situation at all.” Hannibal digressed.

Will nodded in agreement, but felt a modicum of annoyance at being treated like one of the infirm.

“Would you care to tell me what else happened today?” Hannibal had straightened out in his desk chair, facing Will on the couch. “You told me you went out to the courtyard.”

“I’ve told you before, how I like to get away from where I am.” Will reminded. Hannibal nodded. “I did that. To calm myself. I went back to my home, I spent time with my dogs…” Will paused. “I know I’m not really there. But it’s comforting to remember when I was, and to imagine that I still am.”

“You have mentioned doing so fairly often, what makes this instance different.” Hannibal asked.

“When I go, I usually have some kind of awareness of what is happening around me… I just tune it out.” Will swallowed. “I was gone for at least four hours. I don’t have any memory of that time.”

“When did you become aware again?”

“About four thirty.” Will supplied. “I had thought it was noon.”

“What did you do?” Hannibal was not writing anything down. He was simply listening.

“I went to the cafeteria.” Will actively tried to remain calm. “I had two spoons of food before I realized I had missed so much time.” Hannibal waited for Will to go on.

“I went to my room, I felt like I was going to pass out.” Will laughed uncomfortably “I had some mild hallucinations, and I closed my eyes for one moment, and I came back to this” He held up his bandaged hand. “A gift from William.”

“What hallucinations did you see?”

“I heard people talking… and… I smelled.. something that smelled like old wood, maybe the forest..” Will disregarded the content.

“What else did you notice?”

“My notebook was ripped up.” Will added. “Pretty effectively too… I have a couple paper cuts.”

Will remembered the sinisterly calm suggestions William had supplied. He took a shaky inhale. “I think this” Will gestured with his patched wounds, “Is a punishment for ignoring William…”

“What did William want you to do?” Hannibal asked calmly.

“I can’t remember.” Will answered. “I do my best to not hear him. If I can help it… I’m sure it was very instructive.” He ended on a bitter note.

Hannibal smiled sadly. “I am sorry to have missed our appointment this morning, given how distressing today has been for you.”

Will nodded “I understand you have other obligations, doctor.”

“I received an urgent call last night from a former patient of mine.” Hannibal crossed his leg. “It was unfortunate business.”

“How many patients do you see every week?” Will asked, pure of curiosity.

“I currently treat nine patients here in this facility.” Hannibal rubbed his own palm. “However that will not be the case in the immediate future.”

The hair of wills arm rose. “What do you mean by that?”

“I had in fact intended to broach the topic of outpatient treatment with you this evening.” Hannibal looked indiscernible to Will.

“If I’m correct, we estimated my leaving here at about two months from now?” Will felt dysphoric, like the rug he stood on was catching fire around him.

“I felt need to amend our current course of therapy.” Hannibal looked will in his eyes, though Will glanced between his eyes fleetingly.

“Amend it how?” Will felt a swimming in his head.

“Though in all technicality you would be receiving outpatient care, I believed it would be opportune for you to undergo your therapy at my private home and office in Baltimore.”

“Is that appropriate?” Will was apprehensive.

“For illness such as yours, it is imperative you have continuous therapy."

“...I’m not a wealthy man.” Will began. “This place was the best I could afford using my insurance and my savings.”

“Payment is low in priority for my services.” Hannibal waived the issue. “Whatever your insurance plan may cover is the price I will quote.”

“Is this ethical?” Will felt a bewilderment, but relief as well.

“In cases similar to yours, this is not unheard of.” He assured Will.

“I do not want to impose on you.” Will gave customary politeness.

“Consider yourself my guest.” Hannibal smiled slightly.

“I don’t believe I can thank you enough.” Will gushed with fondness.

“Please think nothing of it.”

Will considered the logistics of this departure. He knew this was the course for treatment of his disease, he had read about it before, they had discussed outpatient care, it made sense to relocate to Hannibal’s office… He realized the level of involvement his therapy would include with this change. He was excited and fearful for what would be.

Will was discharged into Doctor Lecter’s care five days later.

Chapter Eight

Will was surprised how far the distance from Willow Breeze to Hannibal's home was. Not surprised enough to remark upon it. The pair listened to a local radio station specializing in baroque and classical music. Little talk was needed. Will felt as drained as he had been for the last few weeks. He may have nodded off through a concerto or two. It was darker outside than when they had left.

"We are here." Hannibal nudged Will verbally as he pulled in front of a large brownstone.

"Your house is very beautiful." Will felt uncomfortable, and tended to hand out compliments when he was.

"Thank you, I feel the same about it." He turned the car off.

Will unbuckled himself. Hannibal vacated the car, he waited for Will to be at his side. He escorted Will to the side door.

"Would you care for me to give you a tour?" Hannibal asked, holding the door open.

"That would be nice, yes." Will normally would decline, yet so much being unknown to him did not seem like the best choice.

Hannibal walked him through the rooms, occasionally pointing out more impressive paintings, quick descriptions of their origin.

"Do you cook?" Hannibal asked.

"Sometimes." Will admitted.

"My kitchen is of course open to you if you are hungry. I am excited to be able to cook for someone other than myself again." Hannibal smiled.

"Oh, no, you don't have to-" Will felt imposing again.

"I will hear none of that." Hannibal put an end to Will's protests. "You are my guest as well as my patient are you not?"

Will agreed, he did remember their previous discussion.

"You are invited to every meal I prepare." Hannibal kept them walking down a sumptuous hall.

Will followed along, imagining the new shapes his life would take.

Hannibal stopped, "This is my bedroom, I know I do not need to ask you to respect my privacy as I will respect yours just the same."

Will was almost affronted, “Of course I will.” He was intrigued that it even needed to be said.

“Of course I never expected anything less of you.” Hannibal dismissed.

They walked to the end of the hall where the walls opened up again into a sitting room.

“Is this your office?” Will looked at the furnishings.

“I have a separate addition further along where I see patients.” Hannibal kept them walking to the other side. He stopped them in front of a paneled door. “This will be yours… Would you care to place your belongings inside?”

“Yes, please.” Will was enthusiastic about the idea, the strap of his bag was hurting his shoulder.

“After, I will show you to my office.” Hannibal said. “I'll have a seat while you take care of your things.”

Will opened the door, still watching Hannibal, who unbuttoned his suit coat then perched on a leather sofa.

The room was a light pastel mauve, with crown moldings and baseboards. Almost in every way, the room was better than that of Willow Breeze. There was an upholstered chair, a chest of drawers, a full mattress bed, and a nightstand with a crystal shade lamp. Will felt grateful.

He opened the door of a closet, and set the duffle bag in there to keep it from sight. Another door led to a bathroom.

Will closed the doors, and returned to the sitting room.

Hannibal stood, tugging his vest into the proper position.

Will was slightly bewildered. Overstimulated.

“I wanted to discuss some procedure with you.” Hannibal spoke casually, sitting back down, Will followed suit.

“Of course.” Will confirmed, a jolt of panic.

“To prevent any distress,” Hannibal began. “I would like to promise you that unless you wish to, we would never have to talk about your therapy, nor your progress outside of the office.”

“Unless I want to.” Will confirmed.

“Unless you want to.” Hannibal reassured.

“I may periodically have colleagues and friends over, they need not know you are my patient, unless of course, you would like them to know.” Hannibal recited as if from a list.

“I will continue to see only one other patient during your stay.” Hannibal informed. “Of course during which time I must not be disturbed except for an emergency.”

“Of course.” Will repeated, lacking any questions.

“I believe as well, that it would be best for you to become situated here before we resume therapy.”

Will felt a twinge of annoyance, he could only think about how soon he would be able to feel centered again. Will agreed however. He saw the logic, whether from his own reasoning, or from Hannibal’s, he was not sure.

The two continued the tour soon after. Hannibal walked with an abbreviated saunter that was more demure from the gait Will had noticed to be so prominent at the health center. Comfort.

Hannibal’s office was opulent. Will realized how small he was in its cavernous luxury. His eyes could not see enough of the room, every corner he turned glancing to was a new landscape to know. He felt a burning urge to destroy its neat decoration. To shove the neat stacks of pages to the floor and knock the trinkets from their shelves.

Hannibal was speaking. Will however had not been listening. An expression on his face must have been telling, as he stopped mid-sentence upon seeing Will.

Will felt he was no longer part of his body. His vision flat, lacking any of its usual depth.

“Will?” Hannibal spoke,

Will barely heard, but he replied. “No.”

Will looked around the space again, feeling that he was still turning even when he stopped.

He could hear Hannibal but not what he was saying.

Will clenched his fist. The tenured scab on his knuckle twinged with tension of the skin, and he felt… All of the haze of his mind slipped away. A searing headache took its place instead, but Will realized, Hannibal’s hand to his forehead.

“I’m okay.” Will had wits to speak again. He had tears in his eyes, one created a drop when he closed his eyes. It oozed out from him, down his cheek, Will wiped it away with the sleeve of his shirt.

“Please, allow me to take you back to your room.” Hannibal asked.

Will nodded, his mind disorganized.

Hannibal kept close, He mentioned a reevaluation of Will’s medications.

Will cared not to speak, but nodded.

Hannibal stopped by the door, ready to bid goodnight, patted the outside of Will's arm, below his right shoulder. "Please rest."

Will was entranced with the absurdity of his predicament. He nodded to Hannibal, and slipped through the door to the guest room. Will pinned for his old life while he looked around the room again. He sat in the chair not yet ready for sleep. Will missed his home, and realized he had never stopped missing it the entire time he was away. He thought of his sickness like a long miserable vacation he could not wait to be home from. "And to leave a terrible review of." Will thought, he made himself laugh.

Will stood and grabbed his bag. He wished he had more clothes. He had on the outfit he'd shed upon his intake. But he did not have bed clothes. Will made a notation in his head to ask if he could go back to his home. He would like to retrieve more clothes, lighter garments for the spring warming weather. He had a stabbing need to call a taxi immediately, to go home and dress. He could go anywhere… He could see Alana.

"You could take her beautiful neck in your hands, and squeeze. So satisfying." A raw callow voice supplied. Will shook physically, shaking off the intrusion, and knew he was here to stay.

Chapter 9

Will slept sparsely, yet better than he had at Willow Breeze. The quiet suited him well, no intermittent yelps or voices. The bed he slept on was much better as well. He had slept in his clothes, they were wrinkled and damp in the places he sweat the most. He stepped in the bathroom after he rose. There were soaps and towels on a wooden shelf erected in the room.

Will stripped and hung his clothes on a wall hook. He turned the tap and let the water warm. Will looked at himself. He used to think he was a thicker man, strong from his years of physical work, with a belly. He saw none of that now. He ran his fingers over the slight raise of rib bones, and eyed the deep hollow between his clavicles. His cheeks looked sunken, the light hit his face in a way he did not know. He no longer looked like himself.

Will cried soundlessly. He felt his illness taking from him everything he used to be. It had taken his home, his job, and his physical well-being. It had taken Alana. The mirror steamed over, and Will could not have been more grateful for it.

Will turned down the heat, testing with his hand. He found it too hot, but left his hand in the stream anyway. -

Hannibal had made a toothsome quiche for brunch. He informed Will it was with gruyere cheese and prosciutto.

Will's hair was damp on his collar, it was too long for him to be comfortable. His clothes were also a source of discomfort, he felt dirty.

"I need to get some clothes from my home." Will informed after they had started their meal.

"Of course." Hannibal replied, he had expected a request as such.

"I don't think I should go alone." Will continued.

"I agree. I would be glad to take you." Hannibal sipped his coffee. "When would you care to leave?"

"As soon as possible would be best." Will hated to be so pushy, did not wish to take liberties of his hosts responsibility for him, yet could not remain dressed as he was much longer.

"My time is yours." Hannibal exclaimed emphatically. "We may leave after breakfast if you wish."

"That would be great." Will sighed relief.

-

Will helped clear the table off. He helped with the dishes as well, disregarding Hannibal's protests.

Will watched in silence, Hannibal poured roasted almonds into a glass sealing container. It was almost an hour of driving to Wolf Trap.

Hannibal listened to the same radio broadcast till it was finally out of range. He scanned, but found no more stations that met his tastes.

Will was at ease with Hannibal's driving. He had been yesterday as well. The cabin of the car was very quiet and comfortable. His heart jumped in surprise when Hannibal started humming a tune. Will began to feel himself falling asleep. He sat back up, feeling guilty. They had just crossed the Virginia state line.

Will searched for more small talk, but the majority of it had already been spent in the first twenty minutes of the drive. Still, he thought.

"It will be odd…" Will began, "coming home with no one to greet me."

"Did you not live alone?" Hannibal asked, hearing contradictory claims.

"I had my dogs." Will smiled, though slightly sad. "They were always happy to see me… Alana has them now. I hope they are always happy to see her." He had made himself sad.

"Have you ever lived with someone else?" Hannibal asked.

"I've lived with girlfriends before." Will recalled with a mental cringe. "It never lasted obviously."

"You were happier when you could just come home to your dogs." Hannibal surmised.

"Much happier."

"Would you have been happy to come home to Alana?" Hannibal asked, kindly.

Will seized with shock at the question, but relaxed when he knew the answer himself. "I would have."

"Part of my agreement to work at Willow Breeze was the allure of leaving my home, to be around people." Hannibal spoke this as though he were explaining the directions he took on the road. "I never thought of myself as an overly social person, however when there is a piece missing, one can feel it."

"Is that why you invited me to stay with you?" Will asked

"...No." Hannibal replied after a pause. "I genuinely believe this is the best course of treatment for you. The social climate of the health center was doing no favors for your recovery."

Will was glad to hear this. It was somehow validating and quelled the misgivings he had of their arrangement.

Watching out the window, Will began to recognize markers of his city; routs he'd taken, shops he'd frequented. "Do you think I can stop and get a haircut?" Will asked, spontaneously.

"I would be glad to, if you would only direct me to a shop?" Hannibal glanced over to Will, waiting.

"The place I go to, it's a right down Main here." Will pointed to the next upcoming street, which was more than two half miles ahead of where they currently were.

They drove along in silence till Hannibal was parked parallel on the side of the street.

"Would you rather wait outside?" Will asked, feeling awkward.

"I'll wait inside with you." Hannibal knew what he was going to do without prompting.

Will waited till Hannibal was by his side once he was out of the car. He also held the door out to him once he was inside. Will was met at a counter by a young woman who took his money and told him to wait in a lobby chair, though there was no one else having their hair cut on this Tuesday.

The woman, whose name tag Will had seen said Amber, walked immediately back to what Will assumed was a break room. Only a few minutes after, the barber came up to greet him.

His eyes flicked back and forth from Will to Hannibal, and settled on Will. "You are obviously the one needing your ears lowered." He laughed to himself.

Will rubbed his hand up and down the back of his neck where soft hair was delicately curling. "That would be me." Will confirmed.

"Come on back." The barber smiled to him.

Will stood up, he unbuttoned his flannel shirt, and set it down on the seat, casually glancing at Hannibal.

Will followed to the chair, the barber raised him up to chest level.

"What are you after today?" The barber asked.

"I guess take off two inches?" Will never knew what to ask for in scenarios as such.

"you want it cut above the ears?" He prompted.

"Yes, not faded, a little longer on top." Will directed.

"Yes sir." The barber was a kind man. He wrapped a coated cloth around Will's neck. "Want to remove your glasses?"

"Oh, yeah. Sure." Will muttered, setting his glasses on the counter. He watched a blurry version of himself. He felt Hannibal's eyes on him. He didn't look over to see if he was

correct.

Will enjoyed the feeling of clippers on his neck. He always had. The barber and he made no small talk, save for a few question about what he wanted his hair to look like, which Will also enjoyed.

The barber took scissors to the top of his hair, Will watched small clumps of his hair fall around his shoulders. He was finished very quickly. His hair was blown off of him with a hairdryer and a small brush. The barber undid the cloth from him and Will stood.

“Thank you.” Will shook the hand of the barber. “It looks very nice.”

“No problem.” he replied with a smile. “See you soon.”

Will smiled in return, and jerked back with realization he needed to give the man a tip. He accepted the five Will offered.

Hannibal was standing and holding Wills button up. He gave it to Will, and watched him put the shirt back on. Wordlessly they left the shop,

Will felt insurmountably better upon settling back into Hannibal’s car. It was another small leg of roads before they were turning into Will’s driveway.

Will’s breath was almost lost to him at the sight of his home. He had never considered before this experience brought forth the importance of his home. Hannibal parked halfway up the driveway.

“It looks different.” Will mused, just to have something to break the silence.

Hannibal said nothing, but appreciated Will’s fondness.

Will grabbed his duffel bag from the backseat on his way out of the car. He fished his house keys from a zippered pocket. Will led up to the front porch, turning the lock, he felt excitement in the blood that pushed in and out of his heart. Opening the door, the smell that he had so missed washed him in a baptism of familiarity.

Will looked around, and so did Hannibal. However, Will attempted not to lose control of his emotions. Not in front of his Hannibal.

He knew he had no electricity, He hadn’t been paying for it. None of his utilities were in service. “You could have a seat, if you want.” Will looked at a chair and Hannibal.

Everything in Will’s house seemed undisturbed. He walked the rooms, lavished in his small comforts. His room was as he left it, a thick light from the window was illuminating the dust he disturbed underfoot.

Will dropped the duffel on his mattress, zipping its middle open. He began pulling shirts from their hangers in his closet, and retrieving clothes and underclothes from his drawers. He packed these garments into his bag as neatly as he could. He changed his clothes, folding the dirty items into the bag as well. He had with him, from before, some personal toiletries, yet

he still grabbed his old toothbrush and toothpaste, antiperspirant, an aftershave. He took more things with him than he knew he would need.

Will soaked up his house, pleased to be there in reality instead of in his mind. Dog hair still remained on his upholstered furniture. Hannibal was looking at the books Will had.

Will watched Hannibal, He thought Hannibal looked almost fluid. He barely bent down to see, yet the way his spine curved was feline, unfamiliar.

Hannibal seemed to feel eyes upon him. He stiffened, standing straight up. He patiently waited for Will to speak.

“I have just about all I need.” Will held his bag awkwardly, his eyes concerned with looking anywhere but at Hannibal.

“Are you ready to leave?”

Will nodded,“yes.” He attempted to feel no sentiment. -

The two exchanged a few pleasantries on their trek back to Baltimore, yet Will’s head was still in Wolf Trap.

Will unclipped his pill container and dry swallowed two pills. .

Hannibal was eating some almonds he had taken with him on this trip as he drove, Will refused his offer to join in his snacking.

Will found the loud crunching and chewing sounds disgusting and turned his head to look out of the window.

-

It was two in the afternoon when they arrived at Hannibal’s home. Will had become increasingly agitated through the duration of the journey. He had not spoken for most of that time.

Will could see clearly that Hannibal knew what he felt, the way he walked around Will, avoiding his personal space on the walk to the side door. Will realized, that he, himself was feeling mere routine anger. He relaxed, feeling amusement from recognizing his own feelings through another. He softened, anger uncoiling.

“Do we have a schedule for… appointments?” Will asked walking in the door behind Hannibal.

“My other patient and I meet Mondays and Fridays, beginning at ten in the morning till eleven thirty.” Hannibal made himself comfortable in his home as he spoke. “Any other time, you may choose, however with your proximity, may I suggest five sessions a week, three hours each?”

Will hid a jump of excitement in his face, “That seems like a good amount.” He thought only a few moments before suggesting. “Perhaps around noon on every day you have no other session.”

“Then it is agreed.” Hannibal smiled softly. “However, never hesitate to talk to me about your feelings, if you need to. Like a friend.”

“I won’t hesitate.” Will reassured. He awkwardly waited around to be sure the conversation was done before he stated “I’m going to put my things away if that’s okay.”

“Of course.” Hannibal agreed.

Will was relieved to be free of the well intentioned scrutiny he had been sensing. He remembered his way back to his room and stole himself away.

Chapter Ten

Will was pleased with his increasing hours of sleep since relocation. He felt as though fluid filled in his joints, he felt less aches and an increased sense of wellness.

His first session with Hannibal had been slight in content. He discussed how he felt living at Hannibal's home, and how he viewed his own disease.

Their second session had not gone as swimmingly. Will found himself incapable of explaining his emotions, becoming despairing, sick whispers in his eardrum, pushing him on tender buttons. He ended the session with hands smashing constant on his own ears to keep from hearing himself, uncontrolled and sporadic sounds finding their way from his sternum.

Hannibal had escorted Will back to his room after their second session. He half carried Will as he leaned almost catatonic on Hannibal's shoulder, his feet uncoordinated and non-replying. Hannibal struggled to turn the handle to Will's room, barely managing to do so. He kept Will going the few remaining feet to his bed.

Hannibal deposited his patient with care on the top of the bed covers. He unfolded the light quilt that lay at Will's feet. He covered

Will gracefully. He looked at Will's eyes and assessed that he was sleeping. Hannibal felt a rush of delight. He felt the round curve of Will's neck, slowly from the base of his skull to the clavicle. He made sure Will was sleeping still. Emboldened, Hannibal let his fingers dance across the protrusion of Will's jaw. The bristle of his kept beard satisfying his senses, he patted Will almost imperceptibly on the shoulder and saw himself out of the room.

Hannibal glanced for the time, it was One Thirty. No better time could there be for Hannibal to begin preparing supper. He had been defrosting a loin for that night. He decided on a balsamic garlic marinade.

-

Will had awakened groggy with a headache that caused spots in his eyes. He reached for the pill bottles on his nightstand, Will felt alone in Hannibal's world. He felt rude for being lonely in his host's home and left for Hannibal's office to check his whereabouts. A clock on the mantle of the fireplace in the sitting room said 4:49. Will remembered the episode that had put him down for such a long rest. He made a quick decision to not think about it again.

Will heard rustling in the kitchen, he redirected his path accordingly. Hannibal was dicing a tuber and looked up at hearing Will's shuffles.

Hannibal set down his utensil. "Are you feeling better?" He asked with some immediacy.

"Yes." Will's calm extended to Hannibal. "I have a terrible headache, but I am fine."

"Is aspirin helping you in any way?" Hannibal began cutting roots again.

“It cuts the pain.” Will conceded, watching Hannibal prep the vegetables. “Can I help you at all with this?”

“You may in fact.” Hannibal stood straight up. “Would you care to shell sweet peas?”

“I’ve never done that, but I think I can manage.” Will came close to the counter space.

Hannibal had a small canvas drawstring bag on the marble that he unfastened, he ran his thumb across the seam of the pea pod, he pulled the pod apart and deposited the peas into a small glazed bowl. Hannibal slid the bag over to Will. He began shelling them the way Hannibal had shown him.

They exchanged few words. Will was deeply thinking. He moved steadily through the few dozen beans. He felt ready to speak. “Is there a chance that I will… phase out like that, like what I did this afternoon… and not come back again?”

“Did you find it hard to come back to yourself again?” Hannibal avoided.

“I don’t think so. I just woke… Like I was waking from being asleep, but still, I’m worried...”

“You must not despair.” Hannibal tutted like a mother. “Things will improve for you.”

He removed the last of the peas.

Hannibal set a timer on the oven control plate, and motioned softly with a relaxed hand to the next room for them to sit. They talked easily for a while, discussing books. Will returned to his room that night with an armful of borrowed books.

-

Will felt amazing that night. He felt enveloped in a comforting warmth that did not overbear. He felt healthy, he felt normal. He curled up in bed with a faint, pleased look on his mouth and brows. He was shocked to feel pleasure of any kind.

Will read a few chapters of a book before his eyes were too fatigued to carry on at eleven pm. When he dreamt, he was in his bed. Looking at himself in his bed, yet he was pronouncedly different. This was not Will as he knew himself. He was younger, fitter. Even his coloring was markedly preferable to Will’s. Will who was not Will sat up from his bed. He stood, he spoke, “am I foul?” He stepped to Will. “I don’t know if I am. I am… self-absorbed, however.”

This figment was smooth in motion, fluid in his charm yet noticeably dangerous in the way he spoke. His intents were obviously those of violence. Will saw in the other the ability to violate, to cut flesh, he saw it all as he dissected the foreign mirror of himself. Alana was under a knife in his hand. He sat, straddling her legs, a knife deep in the belly. He sawed through the intestines that he pulled from the gaping cavity of soft woman. He cradled her cheek, painting her in blood. She had been screaming his name, but she was quiet now. Will fed the knife between her lips, caressing her tongue with the sharpened blade.

“Wasn’t this perfect.” a voice said from his mouth. He saw the living visage of himself to his side, he looked up, drunkenly, a face sticky with blood spray.

The alternate Will came in close to Will proper, he positioned himself in alignment with him. “Perfect.” Will agreed.

The other Will, a pleased look on his face, he embraced Will like a lover. He ran a hand up and down Will’s spine with one hand, and held him close with the other.

He squeezed harder, till Will felt a crushing weight in his chest, he could no longer breath. He closed his eyes, looking up, feeling lights in front of him already.

Will tensed, afraid to move. He opened his eyes, seeing a square ceiling with the perimeter of crown molding. His breath was shaky, though still tight. He rattled and wheezed in his bed.

Will knew he could not go back to sleep. His experiences forewarned him from venturing back into the recesses of his dreams.

He laid aching in his bed, reading again, but barely gleaning any kind of plot from the collection of words on the paper. He ignored William tapping at the walls of his mind. Will fought off the impending feeling of transition he had learned to identify. He knew he was only good, however, at recognizing when it would happen. He was never as successful at stopping the process entirely. Will’s trick to fending William off was to remain calm once he felt the change was on him. This process worked till he was once again agitated, afterwards which every door to him was pulled open. He took a small handful of prescribed sedatives.

Will could hear sounds in the kitchen, cabinets opening and softly closing. Will dressed himself to greet Hannibal, a tan button up and charcoal trousers. Touring through the house to the kitchen, Will began speaking before he came through the archway. “I had quite a dream we can-” Will jumped seeing a woman with a cup of coffee in her hands standing behind the counter.

She flushed red at her inadequate clothing, but looked confident otherwise. “Hello Mr. Graham.” Doctor Grey gathered her mildly snarled hair together on her left shoulder. She knew not what to do, and offered Will a cup of coffee. He agreed, though he felt as if he should leave, he wouldn’t refuse her offer.

Geraldine Grey made genuine conversation with Will, working to ease the discomfort of unintended encounter. Hannibal was, according to Doctor Grey, sleeping heavily.

“Have you found you’ve been making more progress since entering Hannibal’s care full time?” She asked, unaware of the extent of Will’s issues.

“He would be quick to confirm for you I have, but I’m having a hard time seeing any myself.” Will felt overly critical, “But I don’t think I would be as well as I am now without him.”

“He’s a very gifted doctor.” Geraldine agreed. She drained her cup and rinsed it in the sink. She set the china in the dishwasher,

Will watched her do these domestic things, noting her ease and knowledge of Hannibal's home. He surmised she had been here several, if not many times before. He lacked surprise however, he had witnessed the familiarity between the two when he had spent the night in the infirmary at the health centre.

"It was nice to see you again Will." She smiled and gave him a send-off wave after Will agreed with her sentiment. She walked, sure and bare footed back to Hannibal's bedroom.

Will attempted not to think about what the scene behind his door looked like, failing. Will thought, shamefully, of how well he could see her breasts in the small slip dress she wore. Will sighed, his hourglass of agitation filling...

Will walked to his room, hearing small voices as he passed Hannibal's hard oak door. Jealously.

Will thought about Alana, he felt guilt for his dreams, yet he missed her keenly now. He could smell her in his memory. Will glanced to the recently reactivated cell phone on his bedside table. He knew the seven digits to dial in his heart. He had almost called her many times now, but knew how poor a decision it could prove to be. He decided to care nothing about ramifications and touched the necessary numbers. He expected to be declined, ignored, and was not surprised when the fourth ring progressed to the fifth.

He jumped when, expecting an automated voicemail, Alana's voice flowered from the speaker. "Hello?" She inquired.

"Hello, it's ahh, Will." Will felt more anxiety now, actually speaking to her instead of waiting to be rejected.

There was a longer pause. "How are you Will?"

"I could be doing much worse than I am." Will was honest. "I'm sorry, if you did not want me to call…" Will felt an urge to hang up. He realized it was a terribly impulsive decision to call Alana.

"We would have needed to talk eventually." Alana sounded apprehensive.

"Do you think there is any possibility we could talk?" Will assumed she would understand, yet continued. "About what happened?"

"What do you need to know that isn't in the incident report?" Alana bristled.

Will's heart leapt with nerves. He felt like hanging up and wailing, he composed himself. "I'm sorry I shouldn't have-"

"No, I'm sorry, I should have realized this would be part of your therapy. This is a necessary conversation…" She seemed to take time to think of her next words. "When are you available to talk?"

"Really any time… Hann- Doctor Lecter needs to be there." Will conceded before the proposition was ever raised.

“Yes, he does.” She agreed. “I have a day off this coming Friday.”

“I will have to confirm with Doctor Lecter, but it should be fine in the early evening.” Will remembered correctly.

“... He doesn’t know you called me.” Alana ascertained.

“No… He’s preoccupied.” Will replied.

“Let me know if Friday works for you.” she wound down the conversation.

“Thank you Alana.” Will said. He waited a moment for her to speak, but she did not. He added. “It was really nice to talk with you.” He knew the circumstances were not really nice, but he was pleased to hear her voice say anything, no matter how unenthused.

“Good bye Will.” Alana hung up after she spoke.

Will felt mortified. He would like to ascribe the blame of his actions to his disease, but it was lonesomeness that really drove him.

–

Will slept after. Having hum drum dreams that held little content. Upon waking he used the bathroom, he splashed water onto his face, drying with a terry cloth. He stared himself in the face. He looked better than he expected. He thanked himself for getting so much rest.

Will soundlessly walked to Hannibal's office. As he came closer, he heard the sound of a harpsichord twinging its distinct music from the end of the hallway. Will stopped walking and listened to the melody. Sober and traditional.

Will knocked upon the door, lightly, with guilt of cutting into the tune.

“Come in.” a voice called to him.

Will opened the door, quickly closing it behind, as though keeping the creative air within the room.

“My apologies for not being prepared.” Hannibal shuffled sheet music on the stand.

“No, it’s fine.” Will’s voice came out softly. “I was sorry to interrupt, you play very well.”

“I appreciate you saying so.” Hannibal stood and made the way to his seat.

Will nestled into his chair, that impending feeling of plotting an explanation of himself looming. “I have to embarrassingly admit something…” Will opened dramatically.

Hannibal edged forward in his seat. “Is something wrong will?”

“This afternoon, I called Alana…” Will spilled.

Hannibal relaxed. “Ah, did it go as you planned?”

Will looked, bewildered. “I don't… recall planning this.” Will felt a dip of panic in his spine. His tone snapped demandingly “When did we talk about this?”

Hannibal looked up at Will. “Yesterday afternoon, the return drive from our little trip. You and I discussed your next steps of therapy.”

“I don’t… I don’t remember having talked at all.” Will rubbed his forehead, already knowing the explanation.

“You experienced a loss of time?” Hannibal sitting up.

“...No.” Will said after hesitation. “I was aware... I was aggravated, but nothing out of the ordinary.” Will thought more “I remember the entire ride, there and back.”

“Then you and I have both been deceived.” Hannibal looked to Will for a reaction, received nothing but a purposeful expressionless face.

“I don’t want Alana to come.” Will said finally. His mind hummed with a rapid succession of thoughts.

“Why is it that you don’t?” Hannibal asked follow up.

“You should understand.” Frustrated, Will lost reign of his temper. “I don’t want to hurt her again.

“Hurting Alana wasn’t of your doing.” Hannibal questioned.

“It may as well have been.” Will downtrodden, continued. “I don’t know why you feel this is at all a good idea. William tricked you. He organized this because he wants to get to Alana, and I don’t know why. I don’t know why I even called her… Maybe that was William as well.”

“This is not a setback, Will.”

“It certainly isn’t a step forward either.” Will was disgruntled, annoyed with Hannibal. “I don’t want Alana anywhere near me.” Will felt the unadulterated grief in his words.

“I understand that you feel you are still not ready to talk to Alana, however, perhaps William is?”

“Are you taking William on as a new patient?” Will snapped. “I believe my wishes should supersede His welfare.

“I apologize.” Hannibal visibly distanced his feelings. “As I have said before, you ultimately determine the pace your own therapy.” Hannibal readjusted into his role. “Would you object to my speaking with Alana? I am sure you could see how that would be constructive to your treatment.”

Will felt as though his words didn’t matter. He could see no feasible way to deny Hannibal’s request. “I would like to arrange to be elsewhere when she arrives.” Will began. “I can’t be

near her. I don’t know why I called her, I shouldn’t have…” He rushed his words out, Will felt a shadow cross a line in him. He was desperate to be out of the office.

“Please relax Will.” Hannibal leaned forward. “If it would help, please count back from 10?”

Will’s mind swayed and he counted. “Ten.”

“Nine.” He felt stupid counting out.

“Eight.” He didn’t think this would work, it never did.

“Seven.” He realized it wouldn’t work if he didn’t let it.

“Six.” Will closed his eyes.

“Five” He leaned slowly back into his chair.

“Four, Three, Two.. One.”

Chapter Eleven

Will finished his count, first feeling the smooth emotion of content. Then Will felt was his arms bound behind his chair. His fingers stuck together like a sugary soda had spilled over them.

There was blood on him, Will could see it had dripped from above, most likely from a standing position. There was no sheen on it, it had absorbed into his shirt and trousers, yet was still fresh. He assessed, the blood was not his. He felt no pain. Will was alone in Hannibal's office.

Will was unsure about his next choice. His head was clear however. The blood must be Hannibal's.

Will's hands were close to numb, the blood cut off after the wrist ties. He wiggled his arms. They were bound with a wire, the metal cut into his skin whenever he shifted causing Will to cry out. Will looked around the room again. There was an upturned table, papers scattered the floor around it.

Hannibal's harpsichord was askew, the lid of the instrument was flipped open, several broken wires were curling outside of the soundboard. Will's wrists were bound with the pulled harpsichord string.

Will's breath was rapid, but he was soothed by the knowledge that there was never enough blood on him to denote a fatal incident.

"HANNIBAL." Will screamed loud enough to put strain on his own ear drums. Feeling hoarseness in his voice, a soreness of the throat. He didn't wait long at all to scream Hannibal's name again.

The door opened almost soundlessly, but Will heard it. "Are you okay?" Will asked immediately.

"I am…" Hannibal's voice sounded dark but not scared. Will saw blood that was plastered under Hannibal's nose and looked away quickly.

"Please. Tell me." Will sounded. "What happened?"

"It seems that your reluctance to meet with Alana is well founded." Hannibal did not unbind Will's wrists. "You lost yourself to William… He overtook me, hitting me in the nose, I was not expecting him." Hannibal explained, pride damaged. "He attempted to choke me with my harpsichords strings. I was able to roll y-him, I put pressure on your carotid artery, causing him to pass out. I was unsure whether you would be yourself when you woke."

Will cried. He couldn't look at Hannibal who took this time to unwind Will's wrist, the wires making their own distinct music as they bent and swayed against each other on their release.

“I’m sorry” Will pulled his legs up against himself, small cuts on the bend of his wrist marking the leg of his trousers with more blood, he thumped his head against his knee, positioned like a fetus. “I’m sorry.” could be discerned from him, balled up, repeating; “I’m sorry.”

“I want to give you a mild sedative.” Hannibal had shuffled to his desk and back amid the disorganized papers of the office. “Is that permissible?”

Will did not raise his head but agreed in a voice he found gross and unlike his own.

Hannibal knelt with more distance than he usually would have. A hand under Will’s forearm, he exposed the underside of his arm. Hannibal prepared the syringe, evacuating the small pocket of air. He delighted in looking for a large vein to carry the MDMA solution through Will’s body. He targeted the blue and sheathed the thin needle into Will’s skin.

Hannibal pushed the plunger down, down, down, his smirk nonexistent. Retracting the syringe, he watched for the effects sitting back on his heels. His nostrils flared at the small bubble of blood that fed back out of Will’s skin. Hannibal opened a small bandage, placing it over the prick only after swiping the bead of red away with his thumb.

Still on his knees, Hannibal watched for a glance of eyes, then shifted his attention to his own hand. He smelled the red slowly. He closed his eyes, thumb between his lips, he reposited the blood on his tongue. Measured excitement, Hannibal felt his heart get away from his control for a moment, a short, frantic beat took him by surprise when the flavor met his taste.

Will let a small sigh, awash with himself. He looked up, to see Hannibal picking up papers that littered the office. He felt a small point of guilt, but also amazement at the doctor’s seemingly infinite patience. He thought about getting up to help repair his mess, but could not drive himself to.

Hannibal seemed to codify the papers on the table, finishing quickly. Will looked at the dried ooze on his wrists, touching with his index finger the slices, the deep bruises already tender. He realized how much harm had actually been done. He sniffed back the mucus that had been leaking from his nose and mouth during his sobs.

“Are you going to call them?” Will asked.

“Who am I supposed to call?” Hannibal asked.

“The mental health center.” Will replied.

“I am not calling Willow Breeze.” Hannibal began. “Nor are you.”

“I could kill you without even knowing.” Will’s forehead in his hand. Downcast eyes that had not yet had the courage to look to Hannibal. “William is determined to kill every one of my friends.”

“Yet this has never come to fruition.” Hannibal soothed. “You are not the party responsible for these events.”

“I feel responsible.” Will felt anxious, but not as much as he should have been.

Hannibal rummaged in his desk, retrieving a first aid kit.

“I would never have suggested you enter my exclusive care were I not prepared to deal with the possibility of violent outbursts.” Hannibal opened a single use antiseptic ointment. “Hands please, Will.”

Will unbundled himself, knees extending, he awkwardly held his arms out to Hannibal.

Hannibal softly held Will’s arm, dabbing on the ointment with a cotton swab.

Will felt sparks on his skin where Hannibal touched him, he suppressed a sound.

Will finally looked at Hannibal who was focused intently on Will’s injuries. Blood was dried and began to flake away from his orbicularis oris. Will’s eyes flitted to the blossoming bruises along Hannibal’s neck, above his Adam’s apple. There were similar cuts to Will’s along the ligature marks on his neck.

Will’s breath caught, realizing how close he’d come. How near to killing Hannibal he’d been.

“I’m so sorry.” Will struggled out. He wavered, unsure of his balance poised upon his chair. He looked at the blood on his hands, and launched anew into tears and sobs.

Hannibal let Will cry. But he spoke. “I do not blame you. Not for any of this. My nose is not broken, and I will have minimal scarring.”

Will enjoyed a large rush of appreciation for Hannibal. “I don’t know how you can be so understanding, so compassionate.”

“It is easy to give compassion to those who deserve it.” Hannibal resumed to Will’s cuts, wrapping a cuff of gauze around the wrist, taping it off.

“Do you need help with…” Will awkwardly glanced to Hannibal’s neck.

“I will be able to manage.” Hannibal did not stop his task.

“What did William say to you?” Will asked, not wishing to know, yet unable to keep himself from asking.

“He was incensed that I had ‘backed out’ of the deal he tricked me into making.” Hannibal informed.

“The deal to have Alana come here?” Will asked. “You can’t have her here.”

“I realize that now.” Hannibal mused. “I thought myself safe from William. I felt that I had an understanding with him.”

“I don’t have so much as that.” Will was not making light of it. “I can’t control him any more than you have been able to.”

“Your ability to even accept your disease is already a remarkable achievement.” Hannibal stood, going to a standing mirror, cleaning his neck of blood with wet gauze.

Will had flashbacks to the last time, not long ago Hannibal had tended wounds William caused. “I need to figure out why I am this way.” Will had the urge to stand and stretch, he felt calm

“Knowing who William is, and what he wants is the best way to discover why he exists in the first place.” Hannibal did not wrap his neck, Will could see the bruises had widened and darkened. He sat down in front of Will.

“Can I help you fix your harpsichord?” Will felt childish asking, but asked nonetheless.

“I will call a tuning and repair service in the morning.” Hannibal waved away the question. “How are you feeling?”

“....Sturdy.” Will answered, smiling. “Like the base of an oak with a car wrapped around it.”

“Are you aware of William right now?” Hannibal asked.

Will felt around his own mind, like a leisurely stroll. “No… I can’t.” His heart leapt excitedly. “He’s usually...behind me, trying to irritate me…”

“Would you be able to call Alana? She must be informed of our change in plans.” Hannibal seemed more relaxed towards Will, like a front to his persona was lowered.

“Yes, I think I could.” Will tentatively agreed, with misgivings.

“I will be here with you, while you talk to her.” Hannibal motioned to Will.

Will shifted, pulling the phone from his back pocket, settling back into the seat he seemed to sink into the plush forever. The touchscreen felt warm under his fingers as he numbered the keys in sequence.

It took three rings to get an answer from Alana.

“Hello Will.” her voice sounded slow and mesmerizing.

“Alana, hello…” Will still heard her voice in his head, very dearly.

“... Was there something else you needed?” She was patient, but it sounded forced.

“Listen, I’m sorry to do this” Will was not sorry at all “But I have to ask you to not come out on Friday.”

“What changed?” Alana asked shortly.

“Doctor Lecter and I discussed it… We both agree that now just… it’s too soon.”

“That would have been nice to have figured out before calling me.”

“Sorry to have inconvenienced you Alana.” Will held up his end in conversational strength.

Alana seemed to sense how bristly she had been. “Let me know when, and if you need me.”

“I will.” Will nodded to the phone. “Thank you.”

“You’re welcome.” Alana replied. “I have to leave now.”

“Of course, good bye.”

“Good bye.” She hung up the phone.

Will glared at the bright screen of his phone before he was ready to speak again.

“You handled that very well Will.” Hannibal gave Will accolades.

“Thank you.” Hannibal seemed to be very close to Will. He still knelt beside where Will sat. “...Are…. alters often as violent as… William?”

“It is certainly an established pattern of behaviors for a dominant alter.” Hannibal replied almost at the level of a whisper. “Though it is rarer to host such a violent alter, your unique experiences give us an explanation as to why.”

Will didn’t want to think of his ‘unique experiences’. Will leaned his body far back on his chair stretching his arms above his head, the skin of his wrist pulling and stinging. He still leaned into the movement.

Hannibal’s eyes glanced to the white flesh exposed on Will’s torso.

Will did not notice the eyes that lingered. He noticed few things. “This… sedative…” Will began. “It’s very nice.”

“I am glad you think so.” Hannibal devoted little attention to the topic. “It is a mere precaution.”

“I understand.” Will looked straight at Hannibal.

Hannibal was rubbing his neck lightly, tracing his fingers along the fringe of the bruise line. Will blushed in guilt, in shame, in embarrassment.

Hannibal stood, pulling his waist coat into its proper position, he did not seem to notice or care about the drips of blood dried on his shirt cuff.

“This isn’t normal.” Will seemed to be in his own head. “You could have just been killed, by me, and you’re acting like nothing happened.”

“I could have been killed. I was not however.”

Will stood, he paced. “What is going to stop William from leaving here, going out and killing someone?”

“He has had hundreds of opportunities to do so already, you know the best that he is not a common murderer.”

“Is that much better?” Will asked, he was not angry. “I guess it’s...”

Hannibal did not say anything, he watched Will sit back down, cross his legs in the chair, rubbing the thighs displayed with the turn of his hips.

Will thought. Wetlands of Louisiana, dripping shade of the cypress. The kind with the lazy branches that swat at your head when you airboat through the swamp. His head swam with the memories of it.

“What are you thinking about Will.?” Hannibal, perceptive of Will’s changing focus, he returned to his seat across the view line of his patient.

“I’m thinkin’ bout home.” Will replied, creole vowels finding their foothold in Will’s mouth.

“What about home?” Hannibal asked.

“Well, not home really.” Will was looking at the hair on his arm as he spoke, distantly. “Mostly da park I always went at.”

“Why the park?” Hannibal kept him going.

“Ah didna have a happy childhood.” Will admitted. “Ah cared fo maself most’a times. It was alright, but ah neva stay’d in a place long, ain’t had many friends.” Will shivered visibly. “Cand blame ma paw fo what happent, he’wa tryin’ ta make a home fo’us. Canna blame no’un troof be toll’”

“You can’t blame your father for what happening?” Hannibal asked.

“What?” Will asked, looking at Hannibal.

“You were saying you couldn’t blame your father for what happened?” Hannibal repeated himself.

“I was?” Will looked glossy, warm, confused.

“Yes, do you remember what you were going to say?”

“I don’t.” Will rubbed his hand through his hair, letting his hands rest on his knees after. “Sorry, that medication, got right under me.” Will rested his head back against the chair and closed his eyes.

“Of course, you should be resting.” Hannibal snapped back into his rehearsed doctor sequencing.

“I don’t want to sleep.” Will complained. “I don’t ever want to sleep.”

“Is that because you do not want to dream?”

“Mostly.” Will was still relaxing. Melting into a puddle of himself on the chair. “Part of me doesn’t want to wake up, because I might not be me, or worse, I am.”

“And that is bad? Still being you?” Hannibal asked.

Will opened his eyes enough to glare at Hannibal. “What do you think?” Will cracked his neck. “Will hates himself.”

“No, though Will has expressed that he hates you.” Hannibal directed.

“Will doesn’t like me, but he loves me and he needs me.” William smiled, “more than he needs you.”

“I believe we would both be arrogant to assume we were the most important person to Will.” Hannibal smiled back sweetly.

“Well, it’s not you.” William concluded.

“I never claimed to be.” Hannibal placated the rudeness being slung his way, he used the opportunity. “Why is it that you are here William?”

“It’s our body, I want to stretch.” William raised his arms above his head, lowering them to his lap after. He looked Hannibal in his eyes, and raised back up one of Will’s sliced wrists, ripping off the bandage, he licked the wound on the inside of his arm.

“You have done more than stretch this afternoon.” Hannibal didn’t break eye contact, but William did, he stared lasciviously at the bruises around Hannibal’s throat.

“Can I touch them?” William sat forward on his crossed legs, oozing a dangerous charm.

“Do you intend to try to kill me again?” Hannibal asked.

William laughed at Hannibal like he were the dunce in class. “I was never going to kill you.”

“Forgive me for mistrusting your intentions.”

“Forgiven.” William replied, sitting back again. “....May I?”

Hannibal seated with his leg crossed, he nodded.

William sprung up with limberness, more than Will had at his age. He crossed to the side of Hannibal’s chair, “Tilt.” Was all he said.

Hannibal looked up to him with an incredulous look,

“Please.” William added to placate the man.

Hannibal turned his head to the left allowing his examination

William pressed his thumb into the darkest color on Hannibal’s skin, hard, like he was trying to smash a flea.

Hannibal made no noise, and had been expecting it.

“I’m sorry.” William cooed, leaning over the last distance between them to kiss the mark he had abused. He lingered longer, softly, he licked the small crease of skin where the wire bit.

“Enough.” Hannibal dismissed.

“Does Geraldine do you like that?” William asked, curiosity. “Hmmmm?” He added with a subtle wink.

Hannibal remained stoic. “When a submissive wolf begs for forgiveness, or favor, it grooms its dominant.”

“Are you the alpha? Doctor Lecter?” William laughed. “I’d buy it… But you have the distinct look of a man who enjoys being choked.”

“What I do in my private life is not a concern of yours.” Hannibal dismissed with sauce.

“Hmm.” William huffed

“Please have a seat.” Hannibal gestured.

William rushed his hair straight back, turning, agile to his chair. Seating himself, mirroring Hannibal’s position.

“Why are you here, William?” Hannibal repeated his question.

“Will needed me now.” William answered truthfully.

“He seemed in no apparent distress.” Hannibal hid nothing far from truth.

“Whatever you gave us.” William lightly brushed the injection area on his arm. “Got our Will thinking pretty hard.”

“So I noticed.” Hannibal would make no inferences here.

“Pierre is old, and he’s boring.” William said. “But he’s the best little man for the job.”

“Pierre is another person in Will?” Hannibal confirmed.

“Of course he is, don’t pretend to be stupid.” William spat. “That may work for Will, but I don’t think it’s cute.”

“ ‘Cute’ is certainly not my intent.” Hannibal studied William’s face. “Who exactly is Pierre?”

William waved his hand like a contender in a game of peek-a-boo.

Will’s eyes swam in their sockets, and his head rolled.

-

Will came back to himself, breathing heavily, eyes dilated and looking around himself. He had dreamt of dark enclosures, of imminent danger, and he was still not so sure he was out of it.

“Will?” Hannibal asked.

Will looked up and centered, Hannibal was seated calmly.

“What is it?” Will asked.

“Are you okay?” Hannibal asked.

“Been worse.”

“I see.”

“Can we be done today?” Will spoke, but he stood decided already, wilting on his legs.

“If you would like.” Hannibal stood as well, prepared to catch him should Will topple.

“I’m… very tired.” Will walked away without looking back to Hannibal, he made to the door and pulled it closed.

Will ambled down the hall, feeling like a hangover. His face was wet on his cheeks, he didn’t remember crying, but the proof… Will’s heart was fast.

He laid out on top of his bed’s blanket. He rolled and coiled, his muscles pulling and relaxing with his movement. He felt like a fussy infant, incapable of settling.

There was a knock on his door, Will turned his head, his vision tossed circling. “Come in.” He could hear his voice waver, sounded weak, sounded foreign.

As Hannibal entered, Will could see it in slow motion, Hannibal was bleeding, drenching his shirt in the blood that crept down from his neck, his eyes hollow and blackened around the socket, antlers sprouting from his skull.

Will squeezed his eyes shut, willing sleep on himself.

“Are you sure you will be fine?” Hannibal asked, quietly, sweetly almost.

“I will,” Will didn’t open his eyes. ”Thank you.”

“Be well.” Hannibal wished to him, and set a glass of water on the bedside table.

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Hannibal strode back to his office, intentions of restoring order to his space.

The door closed behind him, and he was alone. Hannibal dropped all facade, he scooped up papers that had floated to the room’s perimeter and stacked them. A few books that lay open spreading on the floor, some words up, some down, he smoothed pages and closed them.

Nests of tangled wire Hannibal retrieved from under a chair, the thicker cord the one with Will's blood on it. It had not yet begun flaking. He raised it to his nostrils. Hannibal inhaled a deep breath of the smell. He found it pleasurable. He held the circlets of wire in both hands like a reverent crown, he placed it into his locking drawer.

Hannibal disconnected the hanging strings inside the soundboard of his harpsichord, bundling them up to be thrown out. Hannibal set down the wires on his table, for only a moment. He sat down on his player's bench and began playing an original piece that sounded macabre and minor with the missing notes, but he played the entire movement.

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Will faded in and out of his deep sleep cycle. Waking momentarily for lucidity, then waning into his dreams again. He was locking door that on his return, were opened wide to the outside. He closed the doors again. Hiding from the world that surrounded his home. He ran in circles, closing doors and windows.

"You're a mess little Willie." William sat on top of a table chewing a fingernail.

Will froze from his zealous door closing, he looked at William perched, Will was sweating and exasperated.

"What are you doing here?" Will asked, not concealing anger and disgust.

"Just dropping in. Dropping a line. Touching base." William looked around and at Will.

"You shouldn't be here." Will was more annoyed than surprised.

"You don't want to have a chat?" William

"After what you put me through?" Will grimaced. "I don't even want to look at you."

"But you can't look away either." William stood from his table. "Be nice to me, practice self-love."

Will looked at him. He was frowning, scowling with severity unknown to normal facial muscles.

William reached out to touch Will's face and Will's frown deepened still, but those ethereal thin fingers still cupped his face to prolong eye contact.

"You can't trust Hannibal Lecter. It just can't be done." William pet Will's face more, stroking, Will felt pleasure where William touched his skin. "He's the worst kind of monster, the hidden kind."

"Are you a better monster for being obvious?" Will touched Williams face, he felt like smoke on top of old cement.

"With me, you know exactly. what. to. expect."

Will looked at him, expectantly. The world was seeping in through the doors and windows that lay open, bare to the savagery Will was.

He stood still while the atmosphere plumed around him in gusts of dirt and foreign material. The sands and debris ett away at his skin till he was raw and bare.

Chapter 12

Will sat under a tree. He was small. The boy next to him was looking in the same direction at some kind movement taking place up the swampy path. Will could not identify the boy by the back of his head. The hair was overgrown from the military-emulated cut he'd previously had and small tendrils of curls broke from the surface around the cranial focuses.

Those curls stayed in his thoughts long after waking, however still obfuscated.

He stared at the wall, unwilling to make sound or movement which would mean he was alive or aware.

His hunger roused him from his chicken game. Keenly felt, his guts coiled around themselves, hissing like snakes who are kind enough to give warnings.

He showered himself, still finding old blood stains on his fingers. He woozed slightly at the look of it. He sniffed the coppery traces and felt a rush in his head. He scrubbed vigorously, cleaning well the slices into his skin.

He was dressing when a knock rapped on his door. "May I come in" accompanied the knock.

Will was finishing the zip of his trousers and looked for the shirt he desired. "Please, come in" he finally replied.

Hannibal stood resplendent as was his usual way. "How are you feeling?" It was what he normally asked of Will.

"Very hungry." Will spoke his truth.

"You have been asleep since yesterday afternoon." Hannibal spoke. "You have eaten since yesterday morning.

Will glanced to the clock on the wall he had neglected. It was indeed seven in the evening.

"I came to see if you would be up for dinner."

Will had been clothing himself, he decided the addition of a sports coat would be welcomed for this evenings meal. "I am. I would." Will uttered. He pulled the jacket from its wooden hanger. "Thank you." he added courteously.

-

"It looks lovely." Will praised the arranged plate in front of him.

"Thank you." Hannibal almost agreed.

'Eat with your hands.' A sweet voice in Will's ear laughed its stomach's worth.

A quick draw of breath, jerked shoulder, and Will was alone in his head again.

He looked up to Hannibal with doe eyes. “I’m going to tell you everything.” He attempted the explanation in a concise way. “When I… hear things… Commands. Or… impulses from… the others.”

“How often do you hear these things?” Hannibal casually lifted his fork to his mouth after asking.

“I confuse them sometimes… with my own thoughts.” Will explained. “It happens more than a few times a day.”

“Did it happen just now?” Hannibal asked, not looking at Will, giving him time and emotional space.

“William… suggested I… eat with my hands.” Will finally picked up his fork. He left the knife at the side of his plate.

“His attempts at rudeness would manifest through you.” Hannibal mused, looking at his wine before he sipped. Will ate around the filet mignon, spearing the vegetables and accouterments instead.

“If he could have his way.” Will bit into the roast tomato, glancing to his knife.

“If you would allow me?” Hannibal motioned to Will’s plate.

Will nodded and sipped deeply from the wine, Hannibal came around to Will’s side of the table, to his right. He picked up the sharp blade and Will’s fork, cutting it into small pieces.

Slightly pink in the cheeks, will took a bite of the meat. “Thank you.” He added in a quiet way.

None of their subsequent conversation pertained to their previous meeting, however they agreed to not have a formal session that evening, it being so late already.

Will aided Hannibal with the cleanup. He dried some dishes with a thick cotton towel, purposefully avoiding the knives

“How likely do you feel it is that you will use these knives?” Hannibal asked, drying one with the towel between his fingers.

“It isn’t me I’m worried about.” Will divulged. “Whenever I look at one. I feel… Arousal. But it isn’t me that’s feeling aroused, it’s the other.”

Hannibal nodded in understanding. Waiting.

“It’s reminiscent of a lucid dream, you can get away with anything you do. Because it isn’t real.” Will looked for something else to clean but glanced only at a spotless kitchen. “But this is absolutely real and I almost can’t bare it.”

“You are baring it.” Hannibal denied. “Gracefully I may add.”

Will looked away. He talked about something else.

-

The next day was one where Hannibal and Will did not have a planned session. Hannibal attended to his singularly other patient. Will had never met this other person, and he doubted he ever would.

He read quietly in a chair for several others, classics he had never attempted before. He fried bread and an egg around noon.

After his brunch Will read the news on his laptop but finished up quickly as it overwhelmed.

He heard heels on the floor shortly after that. Hannibal in an autumn colored suit, “How are you this afternoon Will?”

Will stood up to speak, “I am doing well today, thank you.” He continued. “How are you Hannibal?”

“I am excellent, thank you.” His hands clasped one another in a graceful display.

Will checked on the status of Hannibal’s scabbed neck lines and the bruises that blossomed over his features. His nose was swelled up and purple on either sides of the bridge, the colors of his neck ranged half of the visible color spectrum.

Will’s wrists were tight with suturing skin and stung when he washed his hands. He felt an awkward beat of conversational lag. “This book is very good.”

“I agree with you. I have read it several times since I first got it as a young man.” Hannibal sat down next to will and thumbed the hard binding, spreading out on the soft couch, making a show of how easeful he was around Will.

“I can leave you to it.” Hannibal asked.

“No no, I don’t mind the company,” Will forced sociableness on his plate. “I have been alone all morning it feels good to talk to someone.”

“I am sure it must.” Hannibal agreed.

The two talked easily for an hour, Will learned Hannibal would be out of his home the upcoming evening. He felt apprehensive but hid it well. He was curious where Hannibal would be going, especially with his significant bruising.

Hannibal parted to change his clothes for the evening out. Will assumed a symphony or opera where black tie was the norm. Will felt peasant-like in his skin, a measly blue bottle fly compared to the magnificent tropical moth Hannibal was.

Will tucked his body into the bedroom, resting his frame on the chair, book on his lap. He imagined Hannibal reading the exact copy of the book as a young man. He could nary imagine the refined man as anything but confident and affluent.

Will couldn't remember himself as a young man. He had always been old and wizened.

He cracked the book and poured over the words to ignore the slick fingers that probed the openings of his psyche, cooing to Will, promising pleasure and joy.

-

Will did not hear Hannibal leave, he was not focused. He ghosted from his room, through the house, to the kitchen, out of the kitchen.

His excitement leapt with the thought of going in Hannibal's bedroom while he was gone.

"How sure are you that you can trust Hannibull-crap if you aren't allowed in his room." William pouted. "His 'no Will's past this point' club flyer is more than suspicious."

"I trust Hannibal." Will argued.

"Not completely." William continued. "Open the door."

Will reached his hand out to the handle. anxiety and fear rode his insides.

He pulled his hand back to his pocket, turning away, back to the kitchen.

Chapter 13

Hannibal swept through his home hunting for anything out of amiss. Any sign of Will's distress. Finding nothing he retired to his room where Geraldine waited.

His bruises had caused a buzz among the society. Most of his compatriots pretended to not see, others ogled his damages with a zeal.

Three of his fellow symphony attendees asked him what happened.

"I was attacked by a patient." He replied.

This answer satiated two of the questioners, the third pressed on. He had attempted to push Hannibal into breaking confidentiality, asking what illness his patient had, had Hannibal fought back, if he was still seeing the patient after his attack.

Hannibal rebuffed these questions and the man, a distaste is his mouth for his prying rudeness. He would remember him, his name and face rest in Hannibal's mind.

Geraldine came back to his company from the restroom, her face scrubbed clean and wearing very little.

She seemed to trust implicitly that Will would not make another attempt upon Hannibal simply because she was told he wouldn't. She was trusting, but also brave.

Hannibal locked his door for Geraldine to see. "Will has been here quite a few weeks now. I have never locked this door till tonight."

She seemed more relaxed, she gathered her hair up upon a comfortable shoulder, she sat on his bed, unhooking her garter. She traced her hands across the surface of her thigh, exaggeratedly searching for the metal clasp. One of the elastic bands snapped off with a soft pluck.

Hannibal stood in front of Geraldine at the foot of his bed. He undressed for her, pulling his tie through, he shed the black coat, letting it crumple on the floor, caring not the wrinkles that would be.

Geraldine stopped unhooking to witness fully, attention rapt the rapturous exhibition displayed.

His waist coat slipped down his shoulders down his arms, off his hands to crash in a heap of fabric at his heels.

Geraldine's hands were lonely and itched to be put to work. She stood, her silken slip dress shivered around her thighs once more. She unbuttoned his top buttons to bottoms, unfastening his belt, she reached down into his trousers to pull free the shirt that was firmly

wedged to him. She loosed the rich white top from him, Hannibal's exposed skin gave off heat and fine scent.

Hannibal slid the straps off of her shoulders, the silk caught at the roundness of her hips. He pulled at the fabric, sliding it past and from her.

She watched Hannibal's face. She appreciated his reverence and desire that was discernible only to someone who knew him as well as she did.

Hannibal kissed her with his hand behind her neck and one on her back. He was dominating and strong with soft lips. He walked her the few steps backwards to his bed, guiding her to be seated atop the soft duvet. She shuffled herself up on the bed. Hannibal crawled over Geraldine, spread on her body.

He marked her shoulder and neck with rough kisses. Hannibal played her to her reactions, smelling the sweat that bulleted up on her skin.

He lifted her thighs up, unclasping the remainder of her garter snaps. He shifted the black lace belt from her waist, her legs in front of him.

"Hannibal" She vocalized. "Please." There was want and pleading. He removed her undergarment, pulling them from her legs, up and off.

She glistened with wetness between her thighs, Hannibal could see. He had the full scent now of her, familiar, redolent of a garden punctuated with the earthen smell of fair lands.

He remembered her taste, herbal and rich. It made his desire to taste all of her stronger than it was in situations unlike the one she occupied before him.

He knelt to her, like a devout man praying fervently for absolution. His mouth flush with her base, intercalating between the middle of her. Her body released one tension and gained another.

She kept her breath, making less sounds of affirmation than she had wanted to.

Hannibal loosened his control, his lips and face varnished with waters that grew in him a lust for her satisfaction and awe.

He focused, her legs shook.

He hummed a moan of enjoyment. "You are delightful." He added, licking his lips after he spoke conveying emphasis. "Without parallel."

"You are more so than I could aspire to be" She welcomed the man that crawled back up the bed to kiss her.

"I am sure, that is untrue." He kissed her mouth the same way he had ingratiated himself with her clitoris. His tongue daintily followed around hers. His eyes met Geraldine's, then slackened again, he kissed and her hands cupped the hardness between his legs. Softly

stroking, she went to his neck, biting into him the way she knew that he enjoyed, avoiding the scabbed line around the curves of his throat.

She slipped away from him, unfastening his trousers. Her mouth salivated.

Hannibal raised his core to help shift his bottoms off his hips. Geraldine stroked his thighs tenderly and teasingly, brushing the soft hair sweetly.

She nestled on her knees in the space between his legs. Tugging around his waistband.

Hannibal finished taking his own undergarments off.

Geraldine smiled looking at the mass of naked man beneath her. She swelled with delight. She trailed her fingers lovingly over the lines protruding in direction toward his pelvis. She leaned over his erect flesh, gently lifting him from his stomach. She pressed her lips to his head, her tongue licking the clear and sweet preseminal fluid.

Her senses took in Hannibal's essence. He smelled like heat and fragrant spices, she could not imbue herself with enough of his body to be satisfied.

"Geraldine." Hannibal whispered. Her mouth slowed down, luxuriating in his pleasure.

She slowed to a stop, looking to him with expectancy.

"May I take you?" He asked coolly yet with heat and longing.

"Completely." She whispered quickly, stomach leaping in anticipation, excitement.

Hannibal knelt on knees, sitting upon his haunches. "Come here." His hands rested on his thighs, poised.

Geraldine stood almost partly on the bed, she straddled over his body. She lined her body up with Hannibal's. He gripped her thighs close to her bottom, supporting her body as she lowered herself. Hannibal's lips sucked at her neck, she set herself upon his lap, aching for his body to fill her own.

Hannibal held her close to him with one hand, his other guiding his stiffness toward her center. He left himself poised at the entry. Testing his own restraints, holding the pleasure away.

Geraldine's breath was fast, she held on to Hannibal by his hair and his shoulder. Her canal was sore from the stiffness of long awaited fulfillment

He thrust into her slowly and he brought her down on himself.

Geraldine cried out, a moan, a shout, all blended into the primal song of aggressive need.

He pulled wholly away from her, pressing back into her with the same vehemence.

Her head tilted, mouth agape, she relished every thrust of Hannibal's establishing rhythm.

He held her close to him, biting the base of her neck, he settled into a quicker pace.

Geraldine allowed Hannibal his way with glee. She was euphoric, blissful, yet filled with the glorious notion of pure humanity, uninterested with any truth that was not that of the man inside of her.

Hannibal leant forward, Geraldine resting on her back, Hannibal between her thighs. She wrapped her legs around his hips, her hands carving into his back, they explored, tugged at his hair.

She moaned, feeling tensions start to build one more.

Hannibal understood her body's cues, he adjusted the angle at which he penetrated. Locking into a steadier pace. He saw her face brighten with color.

She rocked her body along with his. Hannibal's head rested against hers, his mouth periodically tasting her neck.

"I'm very close." Geraldine whispered, raggedly, softly in Hannibal's ear.

"Relax, I will take care of you." Hannibal whispered back, kissing gently her mouth.

He reached down between them, his fingers slight and dancing atop her clitoris. Her breath jagged, and quick, he pressed on in his venture, holding onto his own release till the time he felt was right.

He brought his hand back up to hold her once he felt Geraldine's internals begin to tighten and spasm around his hardness.

She cried out.

Hannibal heard the sound deep in his spine, her high pitched spirit like a beacon lit in an attestment to the greatness of passion. He allowed himself completion. His orgasm pulsating deep inside of his partner. His eyes closed appreciating his body, and Geraldine's surrounding him. The scent of their bodies was one he could never forget.

He lay over her for some time after. She held on to him like a charm. He enjoyed the warmth from her body, soaking it into himself.

Hannibal pet her face, feeling the zygomatic bones under her skin. She smiled at him, euphoric, peaceful and weary of consciousness.

The pair lain close for hours, falling asleep with bodies touching.

-

Geraldine woke before Hannibal. She showered in his bathroom and upon her re-entry found Hannibal still sleeping.

Geraldine let herself into Hannibal's closet, adorning one of his large sweaters. She walked the halls to the kitchen, pouring a glass of water. She sipped.

"What would you like for breakfast?" Hannibal spoke from the doorway.

Geraldine jumped slightly but recovered instantly. "Oh, Hannibal, I didn't know you were awake."

Hannibal crossed the floor to stand aside Geraldine.

She drank another gulp of water. "I don't wish to impose on you, as well that I have to head home and be at work by 10."

Hannibal wound his hands around her waist like a constricting snake, pinning her against the ledge of the counter and his body. "Let me cook you breakfast."

"Okay." She agreed.

Hannibal smirked subtly.

-

Will smelled food, and as much as he would have liked to cartoonishly follow a scent trail out to the kitchen, he heard a woman and her speaking tone. He recognized Dr. Grey's voice and decided it would be least awkward if he remained confined to his room for the morning.

He sat back on his bed, dressed now, he read more of the book Hannibal had lent him. He heard the high timbre of Geraldine's laugh, and his heart palpitated with excitement.

Gradually the noise lowered, until Will heard no sound. He ventured from his room.

The kitchen lay pristine as though there had been no soul inside it save for the lingering smell of cooked meats and heat.

Will opened the bread box to slice a portion to break his fast. He shoved it into his mouth while extracting a skillet. He lay strips of bacon freshly sliced on the warmed iron.

He ate by himself in the chair he usually preferred which was still moderately warm from its previous occupant.

Doors opened and closed, the drum of heels on wood preluded Hannibal's arrival that Will intentionally did not look up for immediately.

"Good morning Will." Hannibal spoke, stopping at the table for Will to acknowledge him.

Will looked up. "Good morning Hannibal." The bruising around Hannibal's face gave him the look of two black eyes and a band of color across his bridge. Will's heart jumped. "Did you have a good evening?"

"I did, thank you." Hannibal smiled warmly. "I will see you in my office?"

“Yes.” Will agreed. “I will be there once I clean up.”

-

Will sat himself in his chair, the office space looked pristine compared to the last afternoon he was there. Harpsichord strings were replaced, tucked and strung tightly where they were meant to be. Papers were organized again as they had been.

“It looks as though nothing happened in here.” Will commented.

“Order was restored with minimal effort.” Hannibal assured, he walked around his desk to sit across from Will, leaning forward, looking sincere. “I want you to understand, Will, I do not blame you for what happened. We are in territories of psychology where there is no guide, no step program to make you good as new.”

Will looked to the walls to think of something he should say. “I understand”.

“How do you feel you are doing in therapy?” Hannibal asked.

Will searched his own thoughts, his brow crinkled in his efforts. “I feel worse than I have ever felt.”

Hannibal waited for Will to continue, yet sat poised should he need to restrain Will.

“There is something incredibly wrong with me, but you coddle me and tell me I am a good boy who is doing so well.” Will stood, he began pacing and almost yelling. “When in reality, I am not getting better, I am not making progress, and the other day I almost killed you.”

Hannibal watched Will and listened.

“Every attempt I have made to explain this to you, you’ve cut me off, denied my feelings, told me I am doing well.” Will’s eyes were fiery and the oxygen in his lungs burned with every breath, his throat constricting with the feeling of imminent sickness. He gripped his wrist tightly, making the wounds twinge with pain. Will’s anger left him, his brow furrowed still and sobs ready to take him. Hannibal stood, coming to Will’s vicinity. He gripped both of Will’s wrists, prying one from the other. He took Will by the shoulders and delicately led him to his seat again.

“As defeated as you feel now Will, we will work together to change.” He knelt in front of Will. “You will no longer be the person you have always been once you are integrated with all of your selves. It is a terrifying process, but you will be okay.”

Will swallowed and found it difficult to do so, but experienced relaxation. He breathed the way Hannibal had showed him to when he felt panicked and as though he may dissociate. “Why are you really helping me.” Will asked, his voice mucous laced and thick. “Because you want to write about me? Because you think it will improve your reputation?”

Hannibal sat back down in his chair. “Could you believe it is because I know I can help you.”

“Clearly I can’t.” Will retorted.

“I won’t write anything about you without your approval and permission.” Hannibal began. “Though I do believe many people could be helped from your story should it be a success. However I offered and provided you this therapy because I want to help you. I do not wish to see you spend the rest of your life medicated and institutionalized.”

“Why not?” Will asked, “It may be the best choice I could make.”

“Because I believe you will get better.” Hannibal had crossed his legs. “You will fight against this disease forever, but it will not prevent you from living your life.”

Will looked on without much feeling. Glad for dismissed anger, he felt empty now. “It already defines me.” he moaned. “I don’t care one bit.”

Hannibal didn’t respond, he lounged in his chair. “Why do you think this?”

Will looked in his thoughts but they weren’t his own, they were murky and chaotic. “All I can think about it strangling you.”

“Do you notice these thoughts coincide with evasion of the question?” Hannibal asked.

Will only glowered lowly over his brow at Hannibal.

“Do you feel yourself beginning to transition?” Hannibal asked.

Will didn’t say anything, he looked away at a bookshelf.

Hannibal stood, his eyes still on Will, heading to his desk. “Do you feel yourself sinking into the stream as you so aptly put it?” He prepared a syringe of MDMA solution. Stepping back over to Will, Hannibal took hold of Will’s arm and stretched it out. “Or are you in your house again?” Will continued to stare at the bookshelf against the wall. Hannibal prepped the needle and stuck Will. He placed Will’s limbs to face towards Hannibal’s chair. He held on to Will’s cut wrist for a moment to touch his wound briefly.

Will’s head rolled back and he exhaled softly. “Ohh.” he said slowly.

“Better?” Hannibal asked.

His eyes moved under their lids and his appendages twitched softly.

Hannibal tisked and walked around his chair to a drawing table. His sketchbook was open to a small drawing of the Santa Maria della Salute. He admired his work and flipped the page over. He tucked his vellum-like book behind his notepad and sat in his appropriate seat once more.

Will’s mouth was slackened now and he was breathing unobstructed, tranced and silent.

Hannibal rendered Will’s face the way he saw it, gaped and soft with a furrow in his brow that spoke of quiet misery and confusion, inorganic limbs discomforted in their angular positions upon the furniture.

As he sketched, sighs would come from Will's mouth, however, unwittingly, he was a fantastic model. Keeping still and interesting in his physicality.

Hannibal longed to hold him, to shape his body into precisely what he wanted it to look like. But Will stirred. He cooed like an infant babbles. fussing.

Soft "no"'s came out of Will. Battling an internal pressure.

"It will all be okay." Hannibal spoke to the still unaware. "Someday, it will be as it should."

Hannibal put his finishing touches on the portrait. "Soon enough."

Chapter 14

-3 years later-

Will pushed his clothes to the right of his closet, against the wall. He reached past the bunched up shirts and took the garment bag off of the bar. He laid it over the edge of his bed and unzipped it. Hannibal had had a suit made for him. Hannibal's nose turned up when he saw Will's only suit and had set his tailor upon him.

He pawed the fine texture of the jacket fondly. He had felt powerful the first time he put it on. Hannibal had taught him how to tie a bow tie.

The soft knock on the door jerked Will out of his recount, He stepped across the room to open the handle.

Hannibal smiled when the door drew back and his eyes were fully on Will. "The shave suits you well." he approved cheerfully.

Will smiled and brushed his jaw with his fingertips. "I feel like a child, but thank you."

"A youthful face was never frowned upon." Hannibal welcomed himself through the door. "Certainly not with the crowd I expect in attendance this evening."

Hannibal tugged at Will's tie, straightening the bows and the knot.

Hannibal had written the book in only a few months, yet it was perfect in all conventions and style, with impeccable methodology and standards. Will found that he learned more about himself reading Hannibal's book than he expected to. There was privacy however, as Will was never named nor specifics given unless completely necessary. A talented detective could recover his identity, which would happen one day. By that time, it would not matter.

"Are you ready to leave?" Hannibal asked.

Will assessed his presence. "Yes."

-

An hour's ride to the University of Pennsylvania, they were to congregate at the Psychology department offices to receive their instructions for the evening.

Hannibal's face wore his annoyance brazenly while he attempted to find a space to park his car. Finding one a mile away from his intended destination, Hannibal sighed and shifted into park.

The pair garnered attention from students who walked clad in sweatpants and leggings, starkly contrasted to the fine suits the men wore.

Hannibal held the door for Will, who slid through quickly.

-

“The most valuable piece of information uncovered during therapy was a scent memory.” Hannibal spoke to the seated auditorium. Will was in the first row, in Hannibal’s direct sight. “The patient’s perception of marsh gas, chlorine and bug spray gifted us a place to begin with regression therapy.”

Will recalled with a shiver the months he spent, reliving his life, over and over again, on a seemingly endless loop.

“As a child, the patient had been abducted, tortured, and abused by a friend’s father. This abuse occurred after being discovered engaging in homosexual acts with the boy.” Hannibal explained softly.

Will’s eye twitched, reliving the memory he’d effectively repressed for decades of his life. He had taken the fear out of the car trunk he’d been left to die in. He carried it with him now, a constant weight that demanded tending.

Will had not been present for some of Hannibal’s speech. What shook him back was a shrill and jazzy ringtone from several rows back. Will did not turn to look at the interrupter, but witnessed to Hannibal’s face, which had homed in on the perpetrator. Though he never faltered in his speech, Hannibal’s eyes followed the attendee that answered the call as he was walked out of the venue.

“The patient housed five known personalities.” Hannibal continued explaining. “The patient’s host personality, an abuser alter who was the also the protector.” Murmurs washed over the seated audience.

“A gatekeeper, a catatonic personality, and a sexual alter.”

“These personalities became known to me over the first year of therapy with the patient.” Hannibal added. “Which is relatively quickly; though there remains the possibility of alter personalities who are not yet apparent. Multiple instances of integration, however, are common.”

Will found he was staring at Hannibal’s fingers that delicately shifted notes. Hannibal’s voice was a warm sonorous vibration that he knew inside himself. His ears opened again to words.

“Rapid integration theory may become the dominant method of treatment for dissociative disorders as my patient’s enduring mental health would attest to.” Hannibal collected his notes together. “At this time I would accept any questions you may have.”

Dozens of hands shot up into the air. Hannibal selected a woman whose fist shone against the theatre lights in the middle rows.

“Hello, Doctor Keleen, you write in your study of the patient's aptitude for violent reactions, and that you were in fact injured by your patient.” She took a breath. “What measures did you take to ensure your safety in the future?”

Hannibal's smile was fake but warm, "The introduction of a mild sedative until an understanding was reached with the personality, then the simple redirection of violent urges, as my publication would state."

Hannibal suffered through inane questions to which he made a point to relay were answered in his book.

"Will you treat more patients with dissociative disorders in the future?" A doctor Henries inquired.

"I am certainly open to the possibility… Should anyone have any more questions for me or my partner about our work, we are available through the University publishing offices." Hannibal wrapped up. "Thank you for your attendance and I hope you have found this evening enlightening."

The applause was impressive to Will though Hannibal seemed indifferent.

Hannibal walked off stage. Will stood from his chair and made for the stage door at the side. His heel knocked on the old wooden stage, he met Hannibal behind the curtain.

"Very well done." he squeezed Hannibal's arm fondly.

"I was hoping for a more academically rigorous series of questions, nevertheless, thank you." Hannibal looked through the crack of the curtains at the emptying venue.

"Should we follow to the ballroom?" Will asked.

"Momentarily." Hannibal stalled.

Will tried to follow Hannibal's gaze to see what Hannibal scoped out.

"Who is it?" Will asked.

Hannibal bristled before he spoke, the loosening of his mask difficult to complete. "The one in the brown sports jacket, blond, with the navy tie."

Will nodded in understanding. They walked in step to the door he knew led to a hallway. It was a short walk from the auditorium to the ballroom, and they were later to arrive than most of the attendees.

Though early in the day, there was champagne circling around on wait trays. Hannibal lifted two glasses deftly without impeding the workers' rounds. He handed one to Will.

Will thanked Hannibal, his eyes scanned the crowd for the blond in the sports coat.

"Let him come to you." Hannibal spoke only for Will to hear.

The wishes and opinions began to rain upon Hannibal. Will shook every hand that touched Hannibal's though no one spoke to Will directly.

Will saw their mark, he had captured the attention of another guest who seemed entertained by the conversation they shared. Will turned his gaze from the man, maintaining his attention with the natural ebb of social flow.

Will had very few doubts in regard of Hannibal's advice. The man came to shake hands once the stream of visitors slowed. Hannibal nodded to Will when they saw him approach.

"Doctor Lecter, hello." The man stepped forward and palmed Hannibal. "Arthur Savent, I'm a doctoral candidate here at Pennsylvania."

"Good afternoon Arthur Savent." Hannibal greeted before parting the handshake.

Arthur never glanced to Will, never shook his hand.

"Your work is quite illuminating, Hannibal." He began his verbal river of smattering. "You could prove quite useful in my dissertation."

Hannibal stared pointedly, waiting for Arthur to come to his point.

"If you are as knowledgeable of practical treatments for dissociative disorders as you are experimental treatments." He added.

"I'm sure there are many resources available at this institute to assist you in understanding practical treatments." Hannibal replied.

Arthur seemed unphased by or missing the bite from Hannibal's retort. He began making requests to meet with Hannibal "the sooner the better" he said.

"I'm sure there is very much you could stand to learn." Hannibal agreed facetiously. "Might we discuss it over dinner."

Arthur began digging in his pockets for a card. Hannibal looked to Will with an expression Will had only recently understood.

"If you'll excuse me, I must attend to another matter." Hannibal said. "You may leave your information with my assistant." Hannibal strode to the other side of the ballroom, will watched him strike a conversation with a tall, large woman he must have known.

"Are you his research assistant?" Arthur asked, handing Will his card.

"Yes." Will said taking the fox eared cardstock. "William." He shook hands with him at last.

"Must have been one hell of a job, what with him tending that lunatic twenty four/ seven." Arthur laughed.

Will forced one out as well, bristling with a smile. "Yes, but it will look fantastic on my CV, not to mention my recommendation for Johns Hopkins."

"Johns Hopkins, you don't say." He mused lustily.

They both turned to watch Hannibal work the room, letting conversation lag.

“You’ll put in a good word for me won’t you William?” Arthur asked.

“Of course.” he waved it off like it was noting.

“That kind of man can make or break your career.” Arthur thought out loud, sipping his drink.

“He certainly can.” Will agreed.

-

Walking back to Hannibal’s car, they reversed their original path, witnessed the same statues and buildings.

The walk was silent but momentous. Will knew the procedures that must be done before Arthur would be theirs. This fledgling flight was rehearsed many times before. Fantasized about for months, over a year. Words were not necessary now. Companionship was new to Hannibal, but they both were familiar with the necessary courting.

Hannibal packed his case into the trunk of the car, Will waited for him before he sat down in his seat.

Hannibal drove at the speed limit, but his energy pushed him a mile or two per hour over at certain lengths of road.

The two uncorked a bottle of wine when they returned to Hannibal’s home. “What’s next?” Will asked.

Hannibal looked at him after a sip. “What would be your next motion?”

“I would kill him before we ever attend a meeting with him.” Will suggested.

“How will you do it?” Hannibal prodded.

Will stepped to Hannibal, setting his wine glass down at the ledge of the counter top. He wound his fingers around Hannibal’s neck. “I'd love to see his eyes go dim, with his face full of colors”

“Is that slaughter, or torture?” He asked, quizzing Will.

“It’s primal.” Will replied.

“What will you take from him?” Hannibal continued.

“What he values the most.” Will answered.

Hannibal nodded, Will’s fingers slipping from his neck as he did so.

Will watched his hand as he opened and closed a fist. “How do you stand this?” He asked Hannibal.

“What do I stand?” He asked.

“The… excitement, the wait, it’s almost painful.” Will’s blood was pumping quickly, he could have run the perimeter of Hannibal’s home several times and still be filled with excruciating energy.

“Your feelings are visceral. Mine are not.” He replied.

“Your heart is steady.” Will nodded without needing a reply.

Hannibal finished his wine and tilted the bottle for more.

Will grabbed Hannibal’s wrist that held the wine glass, fastening his fingers on his skin. He felt for the pulse, it was all he desired to feel. It was steady, as he said and knew it would be. He closed his eyes and tried to make his heart the way Hannibal’s was. Metronomic and strong, like a robot imitating life the best it knew how. Will calmed, feeling the deep pulse beat against his finger’s tips.

“How are you feeling?” Hannibal asked, his wrist still entrapped with Will’s hand, not bothered.

“Well, now.” Will inhaled the scent of Hannibal, whose lips were red flushed at the waterline with stain of a deep wine.

Will let go finally, and drained his glass. Hannibal now with free use of his arm drank again.

“Is your heart slowing?” Hannibal asked.

“It’s slower.” Will replied, with Hannibal’s fingertips in his hand, he foisted the tips of his fingers into his own neck. ”Feel my heart.” Will demanded.

Hannibal stood still, his fingers in the correct spot. He felt the beat. Will’s skin was warm around his. His hands felt cold in comparison.

Will set his glass on the counter, he used his own hands to press Hannibal’s into his own throat.

“You want, this?” Hannibal asked, massaging the sinew of Will’s neck sweetly.

“Is it so strange?” Will asked.

“It is new.” Hannibal set his glass next to Will’s. “Not very strange, no.”

Will glanced at Hannibal’s hands. His empty hand brushed up the back of Will’s neck, holding him stiffly. He stood close to Will, pressuring his carotid and larynx.

“This is what you would do to Arthur Savent?” Hannibal asked quietly.

Will looked at Hannibal, thickly with his eyes heavy. He could feel, he felt alive and precarious. His heart beat fast again.

Hannibal eased on Will's throat. He leaned forward slowly, giving Will time to move, but he didn't. He pressed his lips on Will's left cheek.

"That's nice." Will's voice clipped short with the tension on his airway.

Hannibal kissed Will's right cheek, then relinquishing his throat, Hannibal picked his wine glass off the ledge again, drinking.

Will glanced over his glass at Hannibal. Smirking from getting what he wanted from the man.

"I noticed you straying during my speech." Hannibal spoke.

"I was lost in thought." Will replied. "Though your lecture was very good, I was dealing with memories."

"You can always tell me if you need help grounding yourself, Will." Hannibal walked around to the other side of the counter. He opened the fridge and planned to collect ingredients.

"I'm aware. Thank you." Will replied, walking over to where Hannibal was. He placed both palms on either of Hannibal's shoulder blades, working his hands around the bone that protruded.

Hannibal slowed, he let Will's hands work around his back. "Where do these feelings originate?" Hannibal quized.

"Transference of my lust, let's say." Will explained.

"And what would you do?" He asked.

"I would have you." Will dug his fingers into Hannibal's back, dragging his nails over the soft cotton dress shirt.

"Should I not want to be had?" Hannibal proposed.

"There is no choice for you in this." Will followed Hannibal's shoulder down to his arm. He grabbed the hinge of Hannibal's elbow and wound it around his back. Will shoved him into the refrigerator door, his cheekbone smacking against the brushed stainless steel. Will crowded him so their bodies touched.

"You are being rude, Will." Hannibal's words were obscured and flattened coming from his mouth.

"I'm aware." Will confirmed, pulling Hannibal's arm up higher on his back, Will pressed against him. He kissed Hannibal's neck.

"Let me go now Will." Hannibal requested.

“You can get out of this.” Will laughed, biting Hannibal’s neck.

Hannibal turned quickly, jerking out of Will’s hold, breaking their connection. He held both of Will’s wrists, as tight as Will had held him.

The glossy look on Will’s face was worth accepting the humiliation Will attempted to bring upon him.

“Don’t I feel good, Hannibal?” Will purred. “Don’t you want more of me?

“There is always more of you to have than I will ever know.” Hannibal mused, kissing the top of Will’s hands, then letting go.

Chapter 15

Arthur Savent called Hannibal's home the next day. Will's excitement piqued only just hearing his voice, Making his plans for the week after the next. This date, supplied by Hannibal's recommendation was close enough to be acceptable, and far enough away to leave time to plan.

Though old hat for Hannibal, he wanted the responsibility of making the night perfect for Will. This time, it would define him. He would remember it every day, forever, the same way Hannibal did.

Will's anticipation was difficult to ease. Hannibal allowed him to slaughter a calf. He let Will molest his body as often as he wished to. He was fond of those slender fingers, clutching to his own body in some way. The dichotomy of their personalities fluctuated tremendously through the week of wait. Will was keenly aggressive, and unabashedly masochistic most days.

Will stayed behind when the day came. The abduction was more delicate, and less emotional work than befit Will.

When Will saw Arthur Savent bound and unconscious, it was almost more than he could register or accept. "he looks beautiful this way." will whispered, roughing up Arthur's hair. "The last time I saw him, he was very ugly."

"He is no longer a person." Hannibal supplied. "He is a thing. A gift for us both."

"Like Christmas morning" Will added quietly.

"Would you like to wake him? Hannibal asked.

"Not yet." will answered. He crouched down to Arthur's level and grabbed a fist of his hair. He made Arthur look at him. "Naughty boy."

Hannibal smiled very softly, amused. He enjoyed seeing a new way, the craft of someone else.

Will looked up to Hannibal, "What was he doing before you took him?"

"He was looking at his mobile phone." Hannibal answered.

"Mundane." Will looked at the immobile face. He pulled His head forward again. Will smacked Arthur Savent hard enough to feel the pain of it in his own hand.

Arthur moaned sharply and his eyes opened a crack. He registered nothing yet, he was open and sightless.

"ARR-THUR." Will yelled at his head.

His eyes fluttered again. Arthur tried moving his mouth to speak but nothing came out.

“How long till he is aware?” Will set the head back down.

“Twenty minutes I would estimate.” Hannibal filled a wine glass, he put it in Will’s hand.

Will drank it all in a series of several long gulps. “It feels like I've been waiting for centuries.” he added on for Hannibal's benefit. His stomach leapt every time Arthur’s body twitched or his mouth tensed.

“You should be able to wake him now, if you wish.” Hannibal whispered close into Will’s ear.

Will nodded. He said, “When I begin… I’ll remember all that you have told me… What you’ve taught me. But please.” Will continued. “Please don’t stop me.”

“I would never dream of stopping you.” Hannibal placed his palm proudly on Will’s back. “I excited to see your performance.”

Will smirked in response. He bent over Arthur again, tapping his cheeks with his hand. “Arth.” he said. “Wake up.”

Arthur’s eyes were opening again, but they moved around, seeing.

“He’s awake.” Will exclaimed like a new, doting parent.

Arthur fixed on Will, making noises with his mouth. The panic began to show as well. His eyes darted around the room and his arms tugging at the bindings.

“I’m very glad to have you here Arthur.” Will enthused politely. “You remember Doctor Lecter of course” he gestured over his shoulder.

“Doctor…” Arthur said with his coarse and tight voice.

“Lecter, yes.” Will finished.

“Who… who are you?” He asked Will.

“You don’t remember me?” Will asked, offended but mockingly. “I even shook your hand, and you don’t remember?”

“William?” Arthur remembered.

“Yes, you have it now!” Will excitedly praised.

“Where am I?” Arthur asked. “Why ar-”

Will punched him in the mouth, not as hard as he could have, not softly.

Arthur cried out in pain and attempted to cover himself, tugging again at his binding.

Will smiled and shook out the impact from his fist, feeling the first wave of relief hit him.

“People will be looking for me!” Arthur yelled out, possibly not for the first time.

“I find that hard to believe, since you don’t really have any family do you?” Will knelt over him. “I’m sure your peers will be glad you got burnt out and left the school.”

Will put a foot on either side of Arthur and sat on Arthur’s stomach, his knees touching the cement floor. He watched Arthur crying.

“Please.” Arthur moaned over and over and over and over and over again.

Will smacked the side of Arthur’s head, cupping his ear. Arthur screamed in pain and fear, Will had never heard anything like it before. The complete and whole scream of a man afraid he may die. Will punched him in his nose three times consecutively until he was sure it was completely broken.

Will sat up straight over the body and turned around to see Hannibal behind him. He stared in his euphoria and his bliss. “Thank you.” Will said.

Hannibal nodded wordlessly but with tears in his eyes.

Arthur’s breathing came through his ragged nose and sprayed blood into the air above him as it rasped out.

Will smeared the blood leaking from his orifices over the rest of his face. Painting the man red on his cheeks, his forehead, on his neck. He licked his hands to ingest his work. “Let’s give him a rest.” Will decided.

He stood, limbered from his adrenaline. Will’s attention now to Hannibal. Will walked the short path to be in front of him. He caressed the back of Hannibal’s head with his wet and bloodied hands. “Taste him.” He commanded, forcing his thumb between Hannibal’s lips.

Hannibal’s eyes closed when the blood melted on his tongue. He licked Will’s thumbprint and kept his eyes closed even after Will withdrew his digit. He appraised the metallic red for a long time in his mouth. When he swallowed and opened his eyes, he said quietly. “It’s excellent.”

Will’s smile blossomed when Hannibal’s sun shone on him. His energy bounced inside him, and Will wanted his knife.

“I would like the knife.” Will proposed to Hannibal.

“You have changed your mind?” Hannibal asked.

“Yes. The knife.” Will nodded.

From his pocket, Hannibal withdrew a folded knife, one that was Will’s from his home.

Will smiled to see it, unfolding it from its hilt with soft care and love. “I know you don’t care for mess.” Will said to Hannibal, still looking at his blade. “Please forgive me this.”

Will knelt over Arthur’s legs and slapped the man to attention. “Arthur.” Will whispered. “You might want to watch now, I’m going to kill you.”

Arthur’s voice bubbled with the blood that was still sliding down his throat from oozing cuts and gashes on his mouth and his nose, but the protests and yelling came through loudly and clearly. It resonated and echoed in the basement like it would an opera haus.

Will breathed in and out a few times, focusing, bringing every measure of his consciousness to the current second. He cut Arthur’s shirt and threw it off to his sides. Arthur wiggled, sitting upon his elbows, attempting to get himself out from under Will.

Will traced his blade over the tender flesh of Arthur’s sternum his blade shifted back and forth over his skin as Arthur moved. Will pressed the knife in, just under the rib cage. He pierced the skin, and he kept going. Arthur’s screams covered the soft moan that came out of Will’s mouth when the blood began leaking around the wound.

Will’s knife went into him until his hands lay pressed against Arthur’s abdomen. Will could hardly hear Arthur’s screams now. All he could hear, all he could see was his knife as he sawed and cut slowly along Arthur’s stomach. Down and down almost to his groin.

Hannibal spoke almost too quietly to hear, but he suggested to Will, “Look at his face.”

Will blinked, he looked up for the first time. “Oh.” he said.

Arthur was losing his color and his lips were a light tint of blue. His eyes flickered, unseeing.

Will knelt up to look at Arthur’s eyes, waited, staring until he saw the life leave them.

Will set back again. He stared at the body in awe. He, dumbfounded, crawled off of the dead man. Will felt peace, he felt drunk. He turned away and looked to Hannibal. Will smiled and laughed with a fast breath. “May I have the cranial saw?”

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